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internet magazine

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ailored solutions for every reader

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We test six of the best site building tools for designers on a budget

Top tips from the experts

Readers' questions answered

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100

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oj.Polyglot Trojan (Y2K Count)
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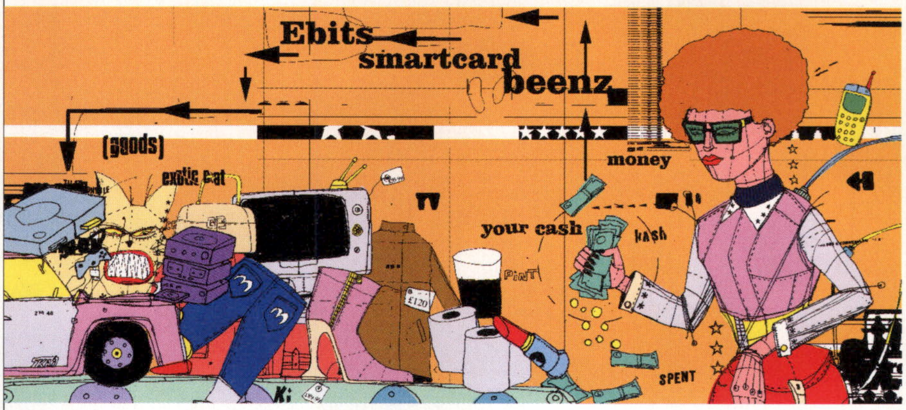

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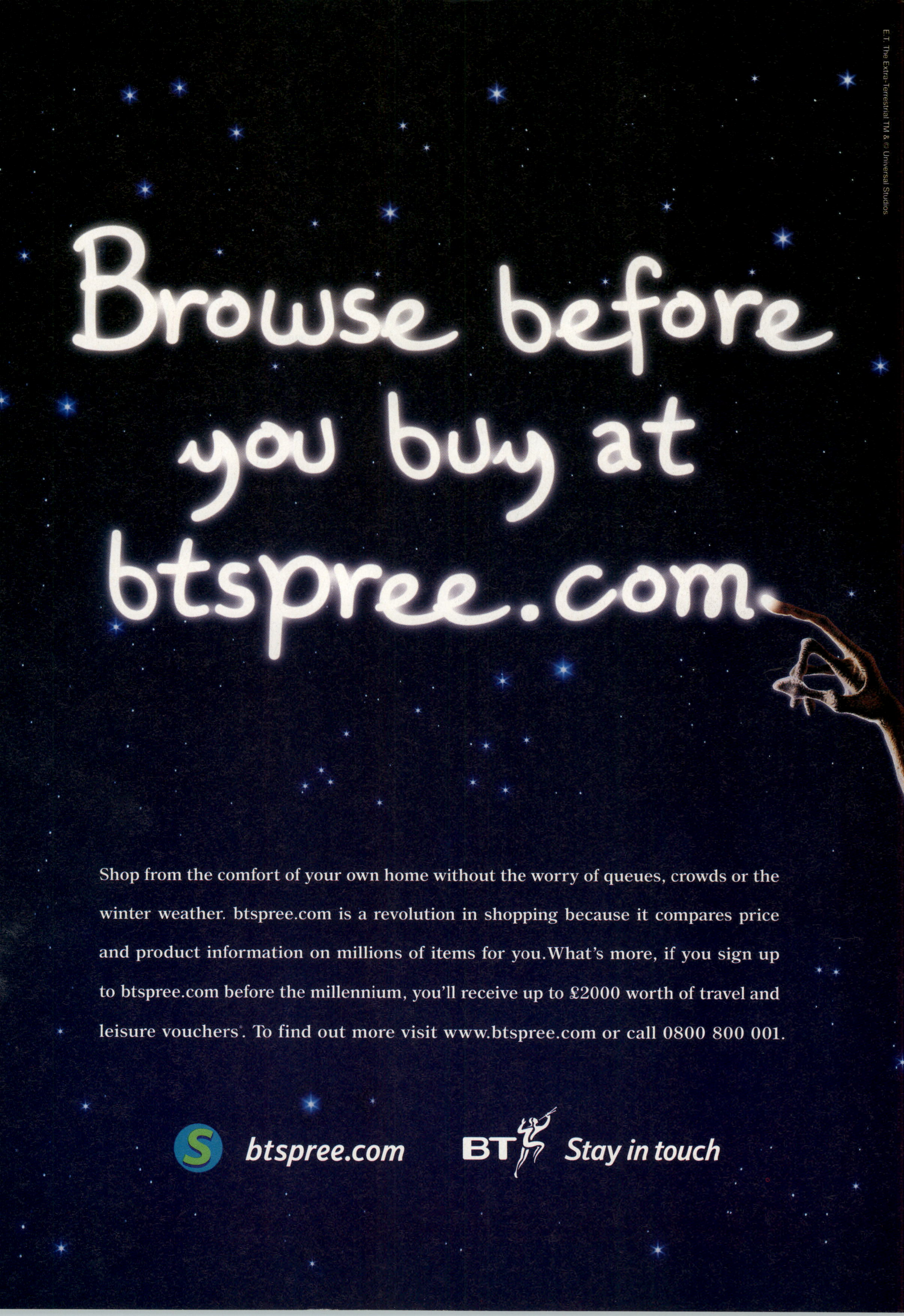

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Editor'swelcome

Got it covered

Happy New Year, and welcome to the January 2000 edition of Internet Magazine. You'll find the usual mix of expert advice and analysis to help you get the most out of the Net.

Providing it's all still working, that is. At least we won't have to hear about the millennium bug any more. We've even managed to resist the temptation of a purple cover with a big silver 2000 on it.

Instead, we have the 'suits you' blokes. It was a lot of fun to do this cover, and many happy hours were spent on Fast Show cover lines. "This week I have mostly been using Freeserve", "Let's offline" and "Aren't Web sites brilliant?" understandably failed at the drawing board stage.

You'd think choosing something free would be simple. Not so with free Net access. On page 42 you'll find our guide to the many options available, and which one would suit you (sir).

But we couldn't ignore the date completely, so we set ourselves an ambitious task to mark the end of the century. Site Reviews editors past and present, Paul Bennett and Richard Dinnick, have selected the 100 Bookmarks of the Century (see page 60). Arm yourself with these, and you'll be getting the best of the Web. And all the links are on our cover CD, to save you time.

Enjoy the issue and have a great 2000.

Tanya Kreisky
Assistant Editor
tanyak@internet.emap.com

Martyn Moore is on secondment, working on an internal Emap project. Tanya Kreisky has full editorial responsibility for *Internet Magazine*.

internet magazine is committed to bringing you the best in Net software every month...

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Try the Internet completely FREE for 10 hours... with no Internet phone bill

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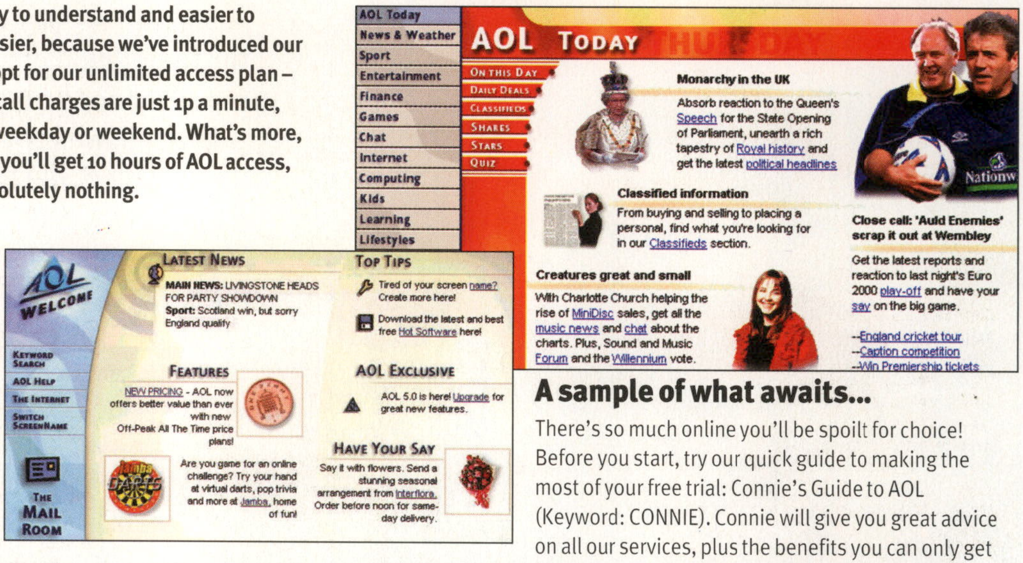

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Learning
Lifestyles

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Classifieds
Shares
Stars
Quiz

Monarchy in the UK

Absorb reaction to the Queen's Speech for the State Opening of Parliament, unearth a rich tapestry of Royal history and get the latest political headlines

Classified information

From buying and selling to placing a personal, find what you're looking for in our Classifieds section.

Creatures great and small

With Charlotte Church helping the rise of MiniDisc sales, get all the music news and chat about the charts. Plus, Sound and Music Forum and the Millennium vote.

Close call: 'Auld Enemies' scrap it out at Wembley

Get the latest reports and reaction to last night's Euro 2000 play-off and have your say on the big game.

--England cricket tour
--Caption competition
--Win Premiership tickets

AOL WELCOME

Keyword Search
AOL Help
The Internet
Switch ScreenName
The Mail Room

LATEST NEWS

MAIN NEWS: LIVINGSTONE HEADS FOR PARTY SHOWDOWN
Sport: Scotland win, but sorry England qualify

TOP TIPS

Tired of your screen name? Create more here!

Download the latest and best free Hot Software here!

FEATURES

NEW PRICING - AOL now offers better value than ever with new Off-Peak All The Time price plans!

Are you game for an online challenge? Try your hand at virtual darts, pop trivia and more at Jamba, home of fun!

AOL EXCLUSIVE

AOL 5.0 is here! Upgrade for great new features.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Say it with flowers. Send a stunning seasonal arrangement from Interflora. Order before noon for same-day delivery.

Your FREE AOL trial gives you:

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- ● FREE customer support
- ● FREE parental control

Getting started on the Net is easy with the world's number one service provider. All you need is a PC, a modem, and a phone line. And, of course, your free 10 hour trial.

AOL gives full Net access as well as 17 exclusive channels covering everything from news and sport to travel and entertainment, to entertain you and your children.

What's new about AOL 5.0 software?

With our limited offer you get the chance to try the all new AOL 5.0 software, which brings you enhanced easy to use features plus great online areas.

Not only can you add colours and graphics to your emails, you can now personalise them by adding your own signature to the bottom and retrieve deleted emails within 24 hours.

AOL version 5.0 supports ISDN and Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0, and allows you to connect at speeds up to 64kbps. Install the software on the CD and you're less than five minutes away from your first Net experience!

A sample of what awaits...

There's so much online you'll be spoilt for choice! Before you start, try our quick guide to making the most of your free trial: Connie's Guide to AOL (Keyword: CONNIE). Connie will give you great advice on all our services, plus the benefits you can only get with AOL. And remember, you can return at any time for more hints and tips!

Get acquainted with Keywords – they let you get to the area you want faster! Just type the keyword you want to go to into the address bar and hit return. Or press Ctrl + K and type the keyword in the box. After that you can find out how to set up your email addresses, (Keyword: NAMES) send your first email, surf the Web – even send an instant message!

Educate, entertain and protect your kids

Set up your parental controls to protect your kids' access to the Net (Keyword: PARENTAL CONTROLS). You set the limits for which AOL and Internet areas your kids visit, so they can play safely. You can block types of access to the Net, such as downloads from newsgroups or specific chat rooms, and you can restrict email sent and received.

Disclaimer

Please note: manufacturers will not support demo software and you install these programs on your machine at your own risk. We have tested them for viruses and corruption, and at time of shipping these all checked out fine.

Internet Magazine **and EMAP Active cannot be held responsible for any problems arising from their use, or for the failure of any programs to run correctly.**

You'll find most of the software on this CD is shareware. Shareware developers put in a lot of work for little return and you should register software you continue to use after the evaluation period. Charges for shareware are usually very modest and registration entitles you to customer support and free or cheap upgrades.

Using your CD

The CD's interface is written in HTML, which means you can open it in any browser. Just open your browser, select File Open, access your CD drive and load the file index.htm.

If you don't have a browser, fear not. We've thoughtfully included the latest versions of Netscape Communicator and Internet Explorer on the CD for Windows 9.x/NT4 and the Mac. You'll find them in the Browser section on your CD.

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Free e-commerce software from Secure Trading

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HoTMetaL Junior Web creation tool for beginners (W9x)
Web Express WYSIWYG Web designer (W9x/Win3.x)
PageMill Web designer for home and small business users (W9x/NT)
Correlate Personal and project portal creator (W9x/NT)
CoffeeCup HTML Editor Popular HTML editor (W9x/NT)
Arachnophilia Windows 95 to HTML converter (W9x/NT)
HTMLib Reference for HTML 4.0 tags (W9x/NT)
HoTMetaL Pro Versatile Web site creator (W9x/NT)
Dreamweaver Trial version Professional Web development tool (W9x/Mac)
WindowWatch Freeware Test pages for different screens (W9x)
HomeSite Evaluation version HTML design tool for professional Web developers (W9x/NT)
Cool Page Shareware Web page design tool (W9x/NT)
Style Master Control your style sheets (W9x/NT)
Ace Expert Powerful Web site builder (W9x/NT4)
Internet NotePad! 20-day trial Edit your Web pages online (W9x)
WebScripter HTML/JavaScript editor (W9x/NT4)
TopStyle Evaluation version CSS builder (W9x/NT)
WebSpeed Optimizer Trial version See your site as others see it (W9x/NT)
Color &amp & Metatag Buster Cut coding (W9x/NT)
Applet Button Factory Create clever buttons (W9x/NT)
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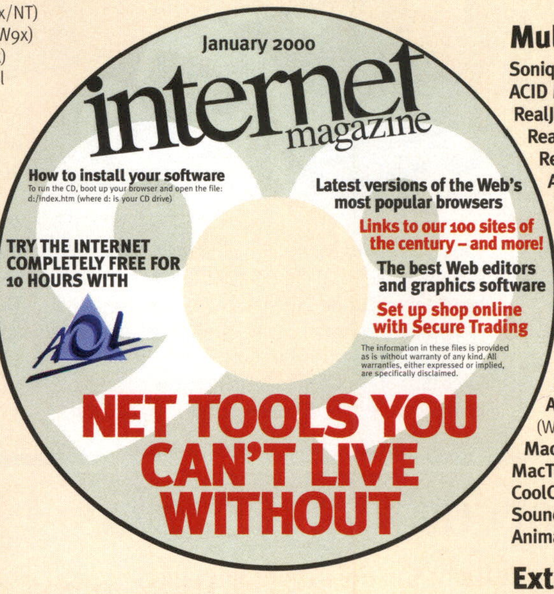
Applet Navigation Factory Better site navigation (W9x/NT)
1st Java Navigator 28-day trial Create Java applets (W9x)
Browserola Preview pages in various browsers (W9x)
GoLive Trial version Slick Web site development tool (Mac)
OptimaHTML Reduces the size of Web pages (Mac)
Freeway 30-day trial Create stunning sites (Mac)
Injection Pro 5-day trial Get higher site rankings (Mac)
VSE Web Site Turbo New version Make your Web page load faster (Mac)
GoClick Convert documents to Web pages (Mac)
VSE Web Site Turbo New version Make your Web page load faster (Mac)
BBEdit Demo version Classic Mac HTML editor (Mac)
HexWeb Typograph Demo version Create HTML docs using different fonts and styles (Mac)
HTML Editor Straightforward HTML editor (Mac)

Great Graphics

Xara 3D High quality 3D images (W9x/NT)
CyberView Image JPEG compression software (W9x)
GIF Animator 15-day trial Top-notch GIF animation program (W9x/NT4)
Color Pilot Freeware Improve your scanned images (Win3.x)
Ultimate Paint Tool for enhancing and retouching images (W9x/NT)
JPEG Wizard Optimise your images (W9x/NT)
Paint Shop Pro Evaluation version Top graphics program (W9x/NT)
Image Optimizer Trial version Shrink graphics (W9x/NT)
NetGraphics Studio Trial version Sort out your images (W9x/NT)
IrfanView Image file viewer (W9x/NT)
Graphic Converter (Mac)
ProJPEG Prepare pics for the Web (Mac)
iView View and organise your images (Mac)
PhotoGIF Create your own Web graphics (Mac)
Photoshop Dither Filters/MediaSpark Filters (Mac)

For your toolkit

CuteFTP File transfer application (W9x/NT)
TopDog Evaluation version Site ranking application (W9x/NT)
Ativa Pro Maximise your time and speed online (W9x)
Wingate 2000 Anonymise your browsing (W9x)
Bullet Proof FTP 30-day trial Resume interrupted downloads (W9x/NT)
Phone Monitor Track your time online (W9x)
CoffeeCup Direct FTP FTP client (W9x/NT)
GetRight Recover downloaded file errors (W9x/NT/Win3.x)
Net Submitter Pro Submits your site to multiple search engines (W9x/NT)
Callwait Trial version Detects incoming calls (W9x)
Visual Route Tracks Web hosts (W9x)
DNTools Dial-up networking tools (W9x)
Adobe Acrobat Reader Lets you view PDFs (W9x/Mac)
RamBooster Freeware Optimise your RAM (W9x/NT)
DrNet32 Anti-virus plug-in (W9x/NT)
WinZip Evaluation version Compression software (W9x/NT/Win3.x)
Stuffit Expander Top archive unpacker (Mac)
SiteRanger Copy your site onto your local drive (Mac)
Anarchie Pro New version Popular FTP tool (Mac)
ZEmailLite.cgi Parses an HTML form and returns results to your visitors (Mac)
DumpTruck Batch URL submission tool (Mac)
VSE Be Found Submits sites to search engines (Mac)


January 2000
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How to install your software
To run the CD, boot up your browser and open the file: d:/index.htm (where d: is your CD drive)
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OT/PPP Strip Switch connections from your Control Strip (Mac)
Fetch Well-known file retriever. Good dog! (Mac)

Just browsing

Netscape Communicator 4.7 New version (W9x/Mac)
Adfilter Block out adult sites and banner ads (W9x/NT)
Linkman Professional Bookmarks manager (W9x/NT)
Esgear Handy browsing companion (W9x/NT4)
SpeedNet Turbo charge your connection (W9x/NT)
Opera Fast and simple browser (W9x/NT)
Powermarks Store all your browser bookmarks in one interface (W9x/NT)
Internet Explorer 5 New version (W9x/NT4)
MacHeadlines Customisable News ticker (Mac)
Web Devil Download pages for offline browsing (Mac)
URL Manager Pro Use the same bookmarks in IE and Navigator (Mac)
Sherlock Search your Mac and the Net (Mac)
Internet Explorer 4.5 (Mac)

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Spam Solution Encrypts your email addresses
Deadletter Eudora anti-spam plug-in (W9x/NT)
Spam Bait Creator Get back at spammers (W9x)
Eudora Spell Checker For Eudora Light (W9x/Win3.x)
Eudora Light Email software (W9x/Win 3.x/Mac)
LetterRip Pro 30-day trial Sets up mailing lists (Mac)
Email Merge Create customised email (Mac)

Multimedia

Sonique Windows audio player (W9x/NT)
ACID Music Streaming audio files creator (W9x/NT)
RealJukeBox Play and record music (W9x/NT4)
RealPlayer G2 Media player (W9x/NT/Mac)
RealPlayer 5 (Win3.x)
Awave Reads audio file formats (W9x/NT)
Audio Grabber Copy music from CDs (W9x)
WinAmp Audio player (W9x/NT)
Audio Catalyst CD ripper and encoder (W9x)
Flash 4 30-day trial Create interactive multimedia content (W9x/NT4/Mac)
Shockwave 7 Play Director & Flash media (W9x/NT4/Mac)
Shockwave Flash Player (Win3.x)
MP3 Strip_It Trial version MP3 Creator (W9x)
Apple QuickTime Multimedia software and plug-in (W9x/NT/Win3.x/Mac)
Macast Trial version MP3 and audio CD player (Mac)
MacTuner 120-day trial Find Net broadcasts (Mac)
CoolCam Shareware Easy Web cam application (Mac)
SoundApp Play and convert sound files (Mac)
Animation Maker Web animation application (Mac)

Extra bits

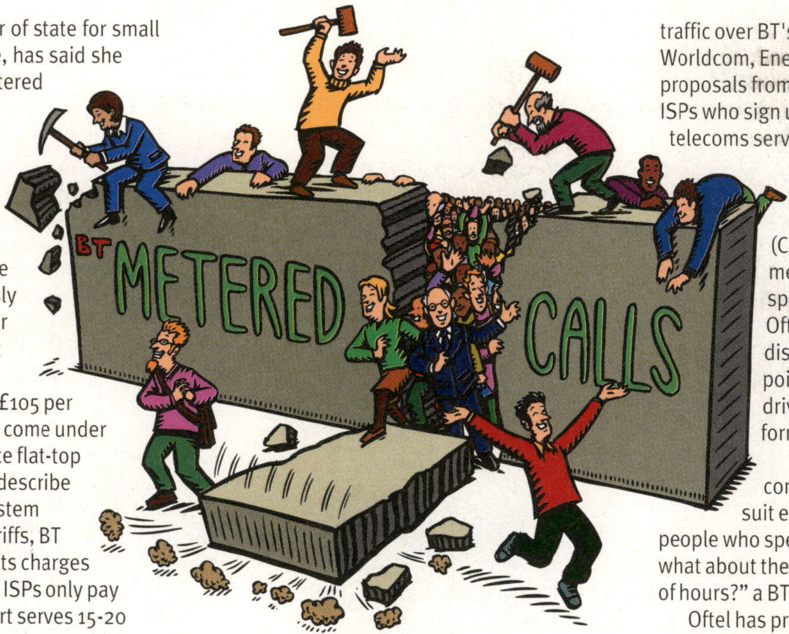
Online Call Manager Engaged phone bypasser (W9x)
Longman Web Dictionary One-click definitions (W9x/NT)
STD Code Decoder Locate areas with phone codes (W9x)
Instant Rendezvous beta Communicate with other visitors to a site (W9x/NT)
SETI@Home Scan for extra-terrestrial life (W9x/NT4/Mac)
ICQ 99b beta Instant messaging program (W9x/NT)
Web Confidential Security program (Mac)
Version Master Freeware Look for software updates (Mac)
Birthdays and Such Daily reminder program (Mac)
GoMac Make your Mac Windows-friendly (Mac)

browser

Who / why / where / when / what's hot

Unmetered Net calls to come "very soon"

But BT stalls despite Oftel claims that there's no barrier to its introduction



Patricia Hewitt, the minister of state for small business and e-commerce, has said she expects BT to introduce unmetered local calls very soon. This followed comments that the present call tariffs are preventing the growth of e-commerce.

"I believe that unmetered calls will be introduced very soon. This is something that the Government takes very seriously and I'm keeping it closely under review," said Hewitt at a recent press conference.

With BT's profits at around £105 per second, the company has been come under increasing pressure to introduce flat-top pricing (the phrase BT uses to describe unmetered pricing). In a bid to stem mounting criticism of its call tariffs, BT also announced a reduction in its charges to ISPs. Under the new system, ISPs only pay £140 a month per port. Each port serves 15-20 customers, so BT argues that service providers can now afford to offer unlimited access at a flat rate of about £20 per month.

But the proposal has been criticised by the Internet Service Provider Association (ISPA), AOL and UUNET for two key reasons.

First, since ISPs have to buy a minimum of 10,000 ports each month, BT's offer will only benefit providers with over 150,000 users. The second problem is that the flat fee only covers eight hours a day (56 hours a week). After that, BT reverts to metered pricing, albeit at a rate of 1p a minute.

The ISPA has also accused BT of trying to force ISPs off competing telco networks. Most ISPs carry the long distance part of their network traffic over BT's competitors, notably MCI/Worldcom, Energis and Cable and Wireless. The proposals from BT are likely to mean that any ISPs who sign up will have to use BT as their telecoms service provider.

Representatives from BT, AOL, Freeserve, Energis and the Campaign for Unmetered Calls (CUT) met with Oftel in a closed meeting to discuss the new tariffs. A spokesman for AOL commented that Oftel was now aware of the ISPs' disappointment with BT. "Oftel pointed out that it's complaint-driven, so it will only investigate if a formal complaint is made."

BT remains bullish. "We want to come up with pricing packages that suit everyone. Flat-top pricing is fine for people who spend half their lives on the Net, but what about the people who spend only a couple of hours?" a BT spokesman told us.

Oftel has produced its own proposals for cheaper Internet access. It would like to change the pricing system used to divide call income between the telcos handling each individual call. This should result in a wider range of pricing options for consumers. It would also like to see an unmetered option for heavy Net users.

www.oftel.org
www.bt.com

Net users get poor customer service

Automated emails and unanswered questions top the list of complaints

People who order goods or services online are regularly having to put up with poor customer service, according to a recent report. Automated email messages and emailed queries from customers that go unanswered are two of the biggest problems hampering the development of online shopping.

The survey, conducted by Servicesoft Technologies, showed that only eight per cent of nearly 1,000 respondents felt that emailed replies met their expectations. Nearly three-quarters said automated messages weren't specific enough.

"Our research confirms that until organisations make their sites smarter at delivering email-based and other support, frustrated consumers will take their shopping dollars to the competition," said a ServiceSoft spokesman.

www.servicesoft.com

YOUR ACCOUNT | HELP | SELL ITEMS
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DVD & VIDEO
ELECTRONICS & SOFTWARE
TOYS & VIDEO GAMES
HOME IMPROVEMENT
AUCTIONS
zSHOPS
HOW TO ORDER
GIFT IDEAS
WISH LIST
GIFT CERTIFICATES
E-CARDS
SEARCH
All Products
BROWSE
amazon.com
Home for the Holidays
HOME COMFORTS
Music
Books

Monday, November 22, 1999

Season's greetings! Shopping at Amazon.com is 100% secure—guaranteed. Already a customer? Sign in.

Search of the Day: candles

- Gift Ideas
For the Culture Vulture, One Who Has It All, 4- to 8-Year-Old...
- Books
Bestsellers, Computers, Kids...
- Music
Top Sellers, New Releases

Looking for Great Deals?
Find titles up to 80% off in Bargain Books.

Amazon.com 100 Hot Books
Updated Hourly
1. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

● **Amazon.com built its reputation by offering excellent customer service**

:-) Yummy, yummy

If you've ever sat at your computer and felt peckish then fear not, a computer guru has predicted that computers will be edible in 10 years from now. Dr. Nicolas Negroponte, founder of the MIT Media Lab in Massachusetts says: "I expect to see edible computers like pills, which you can take everyday and which will act like medical monitors, downloading information about your state of health to a computer you wear."

http://web.mit.edu

OVERHEARD → "A lot of people think it's just a rubbish American daytime soap, but it's always taking the mickey out of itself." Comment about Sunset Beach on the NBC site

Time line

26 December
Rush to your computer and check all the Christmas shopping sites. How many have bothered to take the tinsel down?

31 December
AOL Instant Messenger
AOL promises to release the new version of Instant Messenger by today – along with AIM Talk for sending voicemails over the Net. It isn't the first, but it'll probably be the dominant service, so get yours now.
www.aol.com/aim

1 January
The Internet stops. Not. If you're really worried, check out what the US President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion thinks about it.
www.cert.org/y2k/indmessage.html

1 January
Fly Cathay Pacific • The Heart of Asia
Cathay Pacific starts trialing a system that lets you use the Web from your seat. You just plug your laptop into the plane's local network and link to the phone network.
www.cathaypacific.com

4 January
The nice people who brought us open source Linux for Web servers and email hosting are now buying each other. Red Hat will hand over about £500 million to buy software tools developer Cygnus.
www.redhat.com

NetAid finger-pointing

Online charity concert fails to raise as much money as Live Aid

NetAid, the charity concert broadcast live on the Internet in October to raise awareness of world poverty, raised far less money than the Live Aid concert in 1984. NetAid has announced online donations of just $1 million, while corporate sponsorship amounted to $11 million. Live Aid managed $120 million.

The organisers claim their mission was to raise awareness not money, but Cisco Systems, the event's sponsor, is said to be disappointed. A source close to Cisco told *Internet Magazine* that the company is pointing an accusing finger at US artists, many of whom didn't make themselves available for publicity.

While the UK concert at Wembley Stadium was a sell-out, a lack of support from the media in the US affected the sale of tickets for the New York event.

Critics in the national press put the failure of NetAid down to Cisco itself. Many said that the involvement of a major corporation detracted from the charity status of the event.
www.netaid.org

netaid
TAKE ACTION
WHAT WORKS
WHAT'S NEW
THE CONCERT
ePostcards, coming soon!

● NetAid: raised only $1 million online, while Live Aid's total donations topped $120 million

Government unveils E-commerce bill changes

Key escrow out as electronic signatures gain legal recognition

The Government has published its controversial Electronic Communications Bill. Digital signatures will become legally binding and mandatory key escrow has been removed from the Bill.

Electronic signatures will be given explicit legal recognition by the courts for the first time, and a 'kitemarked' self-regulatory approval scheme will be established to ensure minimum quality and service. People will be able to check who has sent an electronic message, ensure that it has not be tampered with and that no one else has read it. The Government is working with the Alliance Of Electronic Business to achieve this.

The Bill states that if the self-regulatory scheme works there will be no need to set up a statutory scheme. But if self-regulation fails, the Government will establish its own voluntary scheme. This part of the Bill also has what is known as a 'sunset clause'. This means that if the Government has set up no statutory scheme in five years its power to do so would lapse.

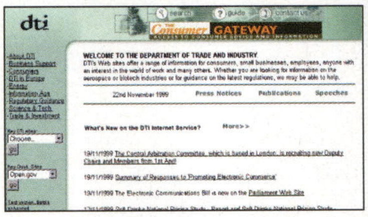
The biggest criticism of the draft Bill was that it included mandatory key escrow. This stated that those who failed to reveal a key in their possession could be jailed for two years. The Government admitted that out of the 92 responses it received most were on this subject.

The Government has agreed to rule out the key escrow clause. But this decision might have more to do with the need to get the Bill through Parliament quickly with a concern over its contravention of human rights.

The issue of key escrow will now be tagged on to the Home Office 'Investigatory Powers' Bill. "Paedophiles, drug traffickers and terrorists are already using encryption to try and evade justice," said Home Office minister, Charles Clarke. " This can not be allowed to continue."

He said that new powers to access decryption keys and the plain text of lawfully obtained material will become available to police under "properly authorised procedures containing strong safeguards".

"This is not giving extra powers to authorities, it is not Big Brother." Clarke added. "It's about giving police the powers they need to read the material they have already lawfully obtained." See www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/pabills.htm for the full text of the Bill. It is hoped that the Bill will receive Royal Assent next April.
www.dti.gov.uk



WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
DTI's Web sites offer a range of information for consumers, small businesses, employees, anyone with an interest in the world of work and many others. Whether you are looking for information on the aerospace or biotech industries or for guidance on the latest regulations, we may be able to help.

What's New on the DTI Internet Service?

19/11/1999 The Central Arbitration Committee, which is based in London, is recruiting new Deputy Chairs and Members from 1st April

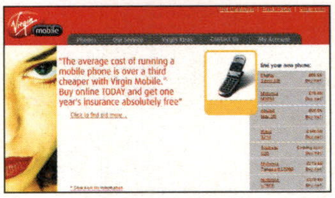
19/11/1999 Summary of Responses to 'Promoting Electronic Commerce'

19/11/1999 The Electronic Communications Bill is now on the Parliament Web Site

● The DTI hopes the Electronic Communications bill will move quickly through parliament and receive Royal Assent next April

IN BRIEF

■ Virgin Mobile has launched what it describes as "the most exciting range of e-commerce services available on any mobile phone in the UK". Among the services on offer are the chance to listen to music through the handset and order CDs over the Net from the Virgin Megastore Web site. You'll will also be able to pick up email using the handsets.
www.virgin.com



"The average cost of running a mobile phone is over a third cheaper with Virgin Mobile." Buy online TODAY and get one year's insurance absolutely free"

■ You can now convert email to faxes thanks to a system known as Fax4free.com. Magic Moments, the Web hosting company, sells advertising space on the fax cover sheet to keep the service free.
www.magic-moments.com

■ If you're stuck for a good idea for a birthday present, take a look at Jomo.com. You can order gift vouchers for 25 stores such as HMV, Jigsaw and Blockbuster and have them delivered anywhere in the world.
www.jomo.com

■ The Government is to offer flat-fee Internet access in Citizens Advice Bureaus. The aim is to give people from disadvantaged groups – the 'information poor' as Tony Blair likes to refer to them – easier access to the Net.
www.nacab.org.uk

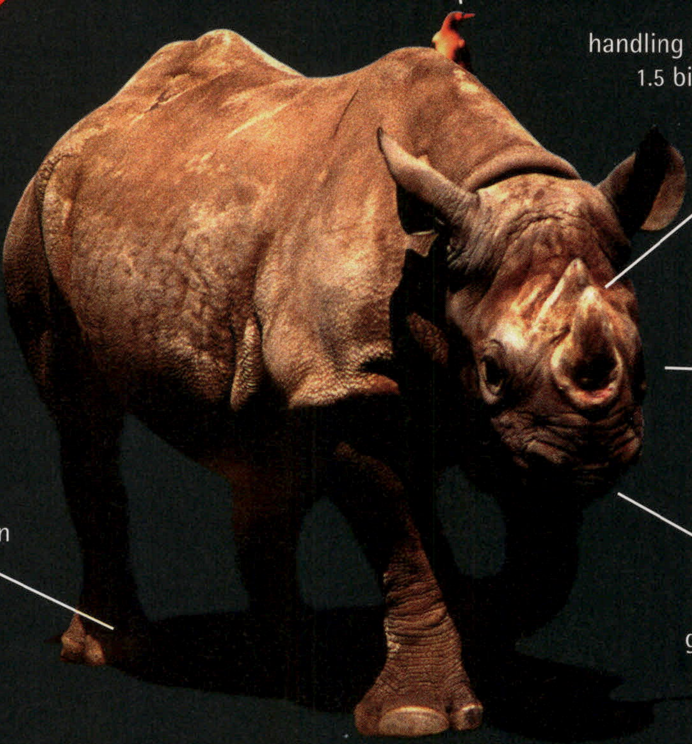
■ Online share dealing site, E*TRADE, is to offer trading on the new FTSE techMARK index. It will mean investors can easily target new and innovative technology companies.
www.etrade.co.uk

■ With the recent auction of the domain name drugs.com for $850,000, a number of new companies are moving into name auctions. CheapNames.co.uk says that with around 11 million domain names already taken, its site is the best place to buy URLs.
www.cheapnames.co.uk

■ In a survey conducted for the Barclays Bank by NOP, 41 per cent of people said they would be willing to switch to Internet banking within a year. This figure rose to 56 per cent when asked about banking in the next five years.
www.barclays.co.uk

BARCLAYS
Personal Financial Services
Business Banking & Services
Online Banking & Services
Investment Banking
Asset Management for Institutions
Barclays Group Information
Free Internet access with Online Banking
for Business and Personal customers

■ Sainsbury's, the supermarket chain, has teamed up with LineOne to set up two portals. One will focus on food and drink and the other on home decorating. Sainsbury's will also sell LineOne installation disks for 50p each.
www.lineone.net



New Ecommerce Solutions

Value:
Unix and NT plans starting from £ 9.95 per month including domain name registration.

Point of technology:
handling over 500,000 emails per day and 1.5 billion hits per month... with ease!

A clear view:
providing 24 hour support 365 days a year with 99.9% up-time guaranteed

Speed:
135 Mb/s via 3 T3s. 67 times more capacity than an E1, providing balance and redundancy.

RapidSite keeps its word:
Risk free, 30 day money back guarantee for 100% satisfaction.

The Worldwide Leader in Web Hosting

Features Available

- ✓ Same day account setup
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- ✓ Unlimited email addresses
- ✓ POP3 and mail forwarding
- ✓ Free WebTrends statistics
- ✓ Unlimited site updates
- ✓ 24 hour /7 day support
- ✓ Your own cgi-directory with script checker
- ✓ Free form-to-email and counter scripts
- ✓ RealAudio and Video supported
- ✓ Free self-installing guestbook and forum script
- ✓ SSL secure server facilities available
- ✓ Complete e-commerce solutions offered
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OVERHEARD → "So its only for nerds?" A question asked in a guide to the Electronic Communications Bill. Well, the guide was written to help MPs, after all

Time line

4 January

Say hello to Ben Andradi, who arrives at BT today from IBM and takes over as head of the recently-formed eBusiness unit. He'll be looking after BT Access, the free ISP for small businesses, and trying to convince us all that BT understands the Internet revolution. Sounds like fun.
www.bt.com

9 January

Vtech – the people who make those nice toy computers for kids – will unveil their new PDA at the Las Vegas Computer Electronic Show today. Called the IMprompt2, it offers handheld wireless access to email and a built-in pager for text and data download. It'll be available in the US in a couple of months and may make it over here by summer.
www.vtech.com

Microsoft ready to settle US case

But software giant may still have to face antitrust action in Europe

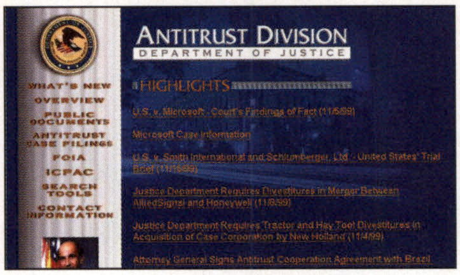
Microsoft supremo, Bill Gates, has told a meeting of his shareholders that the software giant is ready to settle the US Government's antitrust case. Unfortunately, the company isn't out of danger yet as it faces the possibility of an antitrust action from Europe.

Gates, who was described as the "the Don King of cyberspace" in a recent *Time* magazine article, appears to be softening in his stance. He said that Microsoft would go "a long way" to try and settle the case, although he didn't go into specifics. Microsoft was recently deemed to be acting as a monopoly and faces severe penalties including the possible break-up of the company.

Microsoft's conduct toward Netscape, IBM, Compaq, Intel and others demonstrated that it will use its "prodigious market power and immense profits to harm any firm that insists on pursuing initiatives that could intensify competition against one of Microsoft's core products" according to the court report.

The software giant had also reacted strongly against product releases from the likes of Apple and RealNetworks, among others. Microsoft decided to bind Internet Explorer to Windows to make it difficult for Netscape Navigator, "rather than for any pro-competitive purpose".

The ruling makes it likely that European anti-trust investigators will scrutinise Microsoft's activities more closely. Regulators in France and Italy are already considering consumer complaints against Microsoft, while the European Commission said it would study the ruling, and had two complaints lodged against the company.


ANTITRUST DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. v. Microsoft - Court's Findings of Fact (11/5/99)

Microsoft Case Information

U.S. v. Smith International and Schlumberger, Ltd. - United States' Trial Brief (11/15/99)

Justice Department Requires Divestitures in Merger Between AlliedSignal and Honeywell (11/8/99)

Justice Department Requires Tractor and Hay Tool Divestitures in Acquisition of Case Corporation by New Holland (11/4/99)

Attorney General Signs Antitrust Cooperation Agreement with Brazil

● The DoJ could insist on the break-up of Microsoft

Competitors like Symbian, the alliance of Psion with Nokia, say they are worried by Microsoft's actions in relation to its rival CE software. "We believe there is cause for concern in Microsoft trying to link purchases of Windows CE to the purchase of desktop devices," said Juha Christensen of Symbian.

In the UK, Microsoft purchase of stakes in cable TV companies NTL and Telewest, still need regulatory approval. Ironically, Gates has announced that he is donating £2.5 million to help create a network of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centres in the UK. You might think it's a ploy to win favour with the powers that be, but we couldn't possibly comment.
www.microsoft.com
www.usdoj.gov/atr/index.html

Sony and Palm form alliance

Sony and Palm, the handheld computer maker, have agreed to share technology, in a move that is widely seen as a serious blow to Microsoft.

Sony will use the Palm operating system in its new handheld devices that will combine the pocket computer functions found in machines such as the Palm V with the audio-visual features of many Sony gadgets.

The agreement gives Palm an even stronger position in the handheld computer market, which it dominates. Microsoft has fought hard against Palm and British manufacturer Psion, but failed to secure the kind of stronghold it has over the PC market.
www.sony.com
www.palm.com

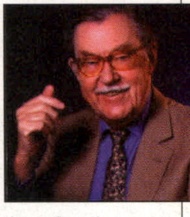
:-) Money well spent

A 51-year-old TV repair man from Manchester has become the first British person to get a divorce over the Internet. Mike Carson, for it is he, looked to the Internet after normal proceedings to get a divorce from his wife, Brenda, dragged on for nine years and cost him a whopping £2,000. With the Desktop Lawyer service Mr Carson got detached for the bargain price of just £60. And it only took a few weeks from start to finish. "I wasn't sure about it, but I decided to give it a try. It really paid off and I'm delighted."
www.desktoplawyer.net

BOOKMARKS OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

It's veteran travel guru...

Alan Wicker



Best known for his show Whicker's World, Alan Whicker was a household name in the late-'70s and early-'80s. He now lives in Jersey and recently become the public face of AOL's relaunched travel section.

How long have you been on the Net?
I went online six months ago. I use AOL and it's all new and exciting to me.

What were your first online experiences like?
I had a few technical problems. I would have been online faster, but I'm also writing a new book.

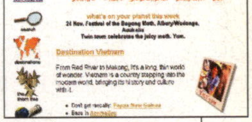
Has the Net helped you in your research?
It's been the answer to my problems. I live in Jersey and I used to have to go to London to visit a library. Now I just go into my study.

SO WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE WEB SITES?

BBC Online
www.bbc.co.uk
It's excellent because it covers such a broad range of subjects.

BOL
www.bol.com
I'm a bit of a bookworm so I love this site.

Lonely Planet
www.lonelyplanet.com
I haven't been too impressed with the standard of travel sites, but this is the best. I've got a lot of respect for these guys.



Channel 4
www.channel4.com
I like the design and the content is always changing.

CHANNEL FOUR
T4
SPORT
ENTERTAINMENT
NEXTSTEP
FILMFOUR
4LATE
FILMFOUR
SHORT FILMS ONLINE
09:36
MON 22 NOV
NOW SHOWING: 09:30 GEOGRAPHY JUNC..

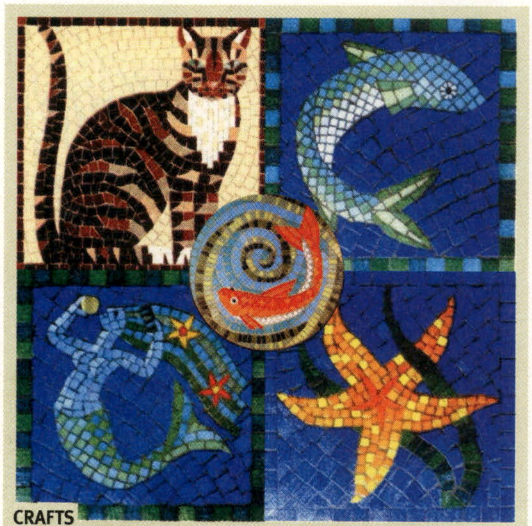
So GRAHAM NORTON
He's come back for more! Listen to his exclusive web message recorded just for *you* and leave your own little deposit in his Frolic Room...

FILMFOUR
The best in modern, independent cinema - Check out the **East is East** trailer and let **The Johnny Vaughan Film Show** be your guide to the latest releases.

FORK TO FORK
The Dons show us the basics for growing tasty organic ingredients at home.

EssentialViewing

The Web is huge and phone calls are expensive.
So save time and money and only visit this month's essential sites



CRAFTS

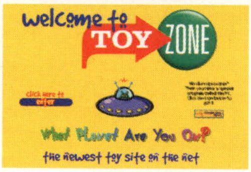
DAY OR NIGHT ON THE TILES

With the New Year approaching fast, how about a new hobby? One craft that has risen in popularity during 1999 is mosaics. Now there's an excellent new site on the Web for enthusiasts of the tiled art. You can browse a well-stocked catalogue, buy materials and 'How To' books, get starter kits and even book yourself a place on a course run by the Mosaic Workshop. Everything you need to get into this popular hobby is here for you, laid out in a clear and simple Web site.
www.mosaicworkshop.com

SHOPPING

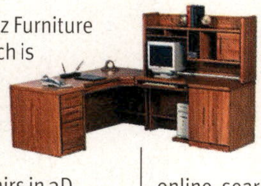
If you've got the New Year's shopping bug and are after some bargains, try the latest addition to the Guardian's (**www.guardianunlimited.co.uk**) online brand – Shopping Unlimited. This excellent site helps you find the best sites easily – listing 15 categories ranging from clothes to travel.
www.shoppingunlimited.co.uk

TESCO direct
www.tescodirect.com
shoppingUnlimited
No time like the present
How many shopping days to Christmas?
What do you want to buy?
feel at LIBERTY
Ireland


welcome to
TOY ZONE
click here to enter
What Planet Are You On?
the newest toy site on the net

ToyZone might be able to help you sort out any belated, forgotten or peacemaking gifts for the kids. The site promises to deliver within 48 hours of your order.
www.toyzone.co.uk

Forgotten food for Fido, or kitty litter for precious puss? Get down to Pet Food Express. This site not only lets you order a huge variety of pet foods and accessories, it's also good on pet-related content.
www.petfoodexpress.com



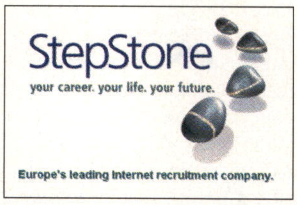
And if you absolutely must have a new desk, right away, try Hertz Furniture Systems, which is now offering you the chance to see its range of desks and chairs in 3D.
www.hertzfurniture.com

Last in this eclectic shopping mix is the UK's first Web-based photo lab, PicturePlace. Even if you don't have a digital camera or a scanner, you can get your piccies online. Post PicturePlace your film, and the bods there will develop it and put the pictures on a secure site for you to view, share, download and buy. Great for getting those incriminating Christmas party photos onto the Web for all the world to see.
www.pictureplace.co.uk

JOBS

Just when you thought it was safe to get back into the employment market, along comes JobShark. You'll have to register for the job hunting services, but this only takes a few moments. Store your CV online, search for jobs, or get the site to do it for you.
www.jobshark.co.uk

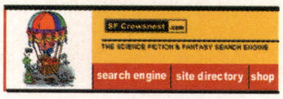
And helping you across the treacherous waters of jobhunting is StepStone. It claims to be Europe's leading Internet recruitment site and backs this up with a vast array of jobs in media, engineering, healthcare, IT, administration, education and more. You can even create your CV online, specify the jobs you're interested in, and leave StepStone to do the rest.
www.stepstone.co.uk


StepStone
your career. your life. your future.
Europe's leading Internet recruitment company.

JobShark.co.uk

SCIENCE FICTION

The SF Crowsnest (sic) has been around for almost four years and – unlike general SF sites SFX (**www.sfx.co.uk**) and DreamWatch Online (**www.dreamwatch.co.uk**) – operates as a science fiction and fantasy portal and search engine. If you're an SF fan, it's worth a place in your bookmarks for its news service and search engine alone.
www.sfcrowsnest.com


SF Crowsnest .com
THE SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY SEARCH ENGINE
search engine
site directory
shop

Alternatively, for sites more tailored to the specifics of SF, check out the ever popular Doctor Who News Page at its new address (**www.logopolis.com/whonews**), TrekWeb (**www.trekweb.com**), or the X-Files Underground (**http://users.erols.com/guesses**) – depending on your preferences.

BODY AND SOUL

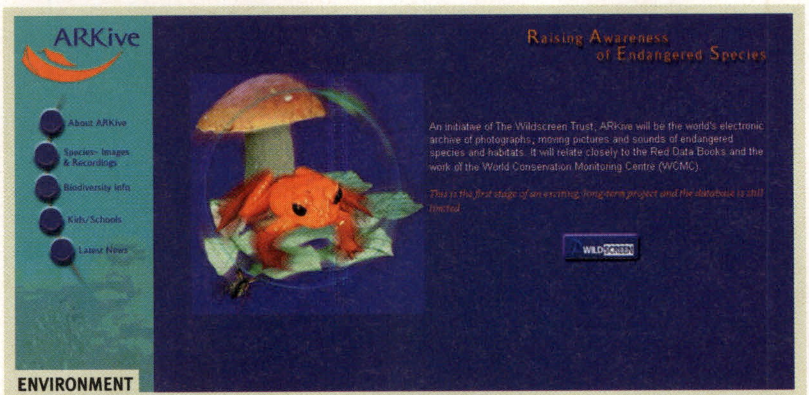
The new Head And Shoulders site isn't quite

3
Select Cuisine
New Search
The Gourmet Oriental
China Dragon
Dumpling
Qinggis
China Garden
Maiden Cottage
Peking and Cantonese
We're Open
2

FOOD

TAKEAWAYS OF THE WORLD UNITE

First there was the Dominos Pizza (**www.dominos.co.uk**) taking orders online and now comes something altogether more comprehensive. Orangepip.com aims to let you order takeaways or book tables online. The service currently covers South West and North West London, but will be rolled out nationwide in due course. There are maps that let you see where your local eateries are as well as full menus. A truly innovative service well worth bookmarking.
www.orangepip.com


ARKive
Raising Awareness of Endangered Species
About ARKive
Species- Images & Recordings
Biodiversity info
Kids/Schools
Latest News
WILDSCREEN

An initiative of The Wildscreen Trust, ARKive will be the world's electronic archive of photographs, moving pictures and sounds of endangered species and habitats. It will relate closely to the Red Data Books and the work of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC).

This is the first stage of an exciting, long-term project and the database is still limited.

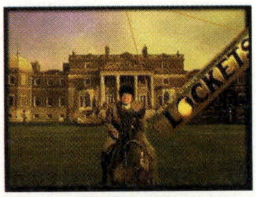
ENVIRONMENT

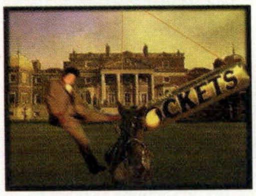
MAKE THE MOST OF THEM WHILE YOU CAN

With many species in peril of being wiped out on the eve of the 21st century, ARKive is an excellent site that lets you learn about, see and hear some of the world's endangered species and habitats. This initiative from the WildScreen Trust (**www.wildscreen.org.uk**) lets you browse through the database to watch a basking shark, listen to a Bush Dog, or glimpse the fast-disappearing Sunset Cup Coral and Bee Orchid.
www.arkive.org.uk

head and shoulders above other sites. But it does include an addictive little game, where you steer Jules (and his alter ego, Cool Jules) around town, shooing away shagging dogs, catching robbers and clearing up the house.
www.cooljules.com

Moving down the aisle from shampoo to throat lozenges, we find the new Lockets site, Double Action. Based loosely (alas) around the 'Daddy left me this land...' ad campaign, the site is divided into Cold Relief and Comic Relief sections, for an unlikely combination of health advice and humour.
www.doubleaction.co.uk





Hot on the heels of sites that organise your wedding, funeral and office life, comes the mother of all sites – one that looks after you as you prepare for parenthood. Designed by Mazware (**www.mazware.com**) – the team behind Confetti (**www.confetti.co.uk**) – Web Baby has 1,500 pages now, but aims to have more than 5,000 packed with advice on preconception, pregnancy, babies and toddlers.
www.webbaby.co.uk

Home
What's On
Showtime
Cool Stuff
Prizes
Never Bored
E-Mail
Studio
Club
win lots of prizes on citv.co.uk
it's Monday!
Showtime@CITV
Now:
Next:
Showtime
Meet the Crew
Pin Board
Captain Pugwash
Only on CiTV
Every Sunday
Next Time
THE PORTOBELLO PLAGUE

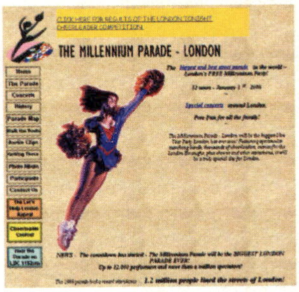
ENTERTAINMENT

ITV's kiddies TV site, CITV Online has launched, giving children's faves *SM:TV Live*, *Mopatop's Shop*, *Teddybears*, *Maisy*, *Kipper*, *Fun House*, *The Worst Witch* and *Bernard's Watch* their own home on the Net. The site also promotes some new kids on the block, including *Watership Down*, *My Parents Are Aliens* and *Jungle Run*.
www.citv.co.uk

Meanwhile, last month saw the launch of another music site, cashing in on the hot Net topic of the moment. So, what makes this site different? It has the latest UK music news updated every day, a database of over 1,500 bands and artists complete with links to official and unofficial sites, an auction section where you can bid for music memorabilia, gig ticket purchasing and online shopping for CDs, videos and books.
www.music999.com

AND FINALLY

If you aren't tucked up in bed – or still boozing – at 12 noon on 1 January 2000, why not pop along to the London Parade? According to organisers, it's going to be the biggest and best street parade in the world. The Millennium Parade is the 14th Annual London Parade. For more info, check out the event's Web site.
www.londonparade.co.uk


THE MILLENNIUM PARADE - LONDON

TECHUPDATE

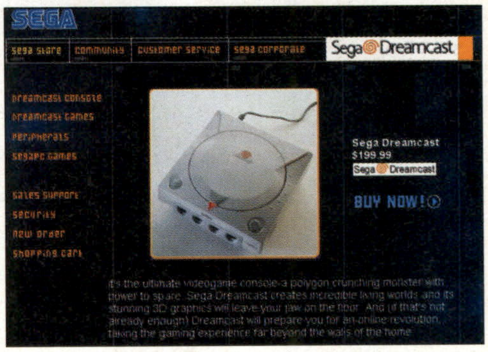
ALL THE LATEST INTERNET TECHNOLOGY NEWS

■ **A new ghost ISP aims to cut the cost of checking for new email. Businesses are being invited to use a FreeCheck dial-up number. If there's no new mail, a connection isn't made and there's no charge. If new mail is waiting, a connection is made at regular local call rates. FreeCheck claims the system could cut the Internet bills of small businesses by 10 percent.**
www.freecheck.net

HOME
FreeCheck
Register NOW
What is FreeCheck?
FAQ
Contact us
Press updates
Modify your account

● Get your own back on your telephone company. Check emails for free

■ We're not impressed by the Net access you get through the Sega Dreamcast console, but we're awed by how many have been sold. In its first 24 hours on sale in the US, Dreamcast took $97,904,618, beating the movie *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* ($28,000) and entering the record books as the biggest one-day entertainment retail sale.
www.sega.com


SEGA
sega store
community
customer service
sega corporate
Sega Dreamcast
dreamcast console
dreamcast games
peripherals
segapc games
sales support
security
new order
shopping cart
Sega Dreamcast
$199.99
BUY NOW!

It's the ultimate videogame console-a polygon crunching monster with power to spare. Sega Dreamcast creates incredible living worlds and its stunning 3D graphics will leave your jaw on the floor. And (if that's not already enough) Dreamcast will prepare you for an online revolution, taking the gaming experience far beyond the walls of the home.

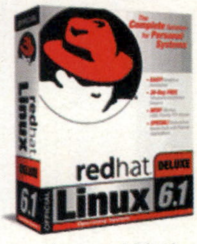
● There's plenty of Dreamcasts out there, just a shame their Internet access is so poor

■ **Major convergence company Virtualplus has a new venture aimed at mobile phone users. When JustPhone users call their personalised number, their new emails are read out to them. The system will also allow emails to UK mailboxes to be checked from abroad – not easy with ISPs having UK-only numbers.**
www.justphone.com

■ In the future you might not have much software on your computer. Through your Internet connection you'll be able to use software on remote machines. Microsoft has brought out Office Online. Businesses can use Office 2000 remotely through a Microsoft partnership with BT.
www.btintranet.com

■ **Philips has developed Speech Browser software (10Mb) that lets you control Internet Explorer. The vocabulary is Web specialised and concentrates on expressions such as 'refresh' and 'go back'. The download is free.**
www.speech.philips.com

■ Red Hat Software, the top Linux reseller, recently acquired Cynus Solutions, a company that specialises in handheld computing. So don't be surprised if Linux soon ends up on handheld machines.
www.orange.co.uk


redhat DELUXE
Linux 6.1

● Linux could be in your first handheld

Have you clicked yet?

FREE
EVENING
AND WEEKEND
INTERNET CALLS

So called 'free' Internet service providers give you free access to the net – but you are charged for every single Internet call you make. Whereas with ClaraNET, a monthly subscription of just £5.99 gives you 12 FREE HOURS of evening and weekend Internet call time.

For real Internet value, ClaraNET is right on the button.

ClaraNET

www.clara.net
0845 355 1000

- Unlimited email addresses
- 24 hr support line at local rates
- 50MB webspace

Boo.com defends itself against criticism

Online retailer blames Mac glitches for delay in launch

The saga of Boo.com, the online sports fashion retailer, has continued, with the company defending itself against its many knockers.

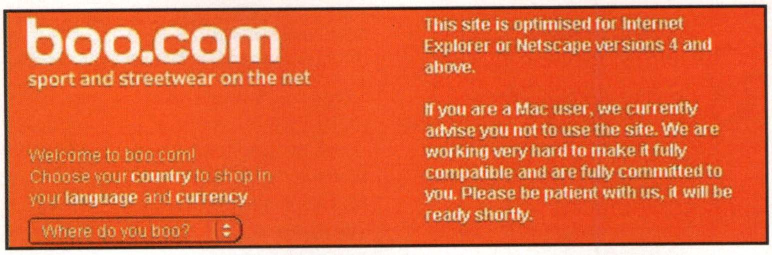
Boo.com, the largest Internet startup in Europe, attracted widespread criticism for arriving six months late. When it eventually appeared, the technically advanced site couldn't be viewed unless you had the latest browser and several plug-ins installed. Most seriously of all, it couldn't be viewed on Apple Macs.

As we went to press, a message on the site read: "If you are a Mac user we currently advise you not to use this site." It continues "We are working very hard to make it fully compatible and are fully committed to you."

In a statement, a spokeswoman said the site had been developed for "the latest technology available, not the lowest common denominator".

She went on, saying the delays in launching the site were due to it being "one of the most complex and ambitious e-tailing platforms ever built". For more information, see our review on page 76.

www.boo.com



boo.com
sport and streetwear on the net

Welcome to boo.com!
Choose your country to shop in your language and currency

Where do you boo?

This site is optimised for Internet Explorer or Netscape versions 4 and above.

If you are a Mac user, we currently advise you not to use the site. We are working very hard to make it fully compatible and are fully committed to you. Please be patient with us, it will be ready shortly.

● Boo hoo: only PC users with the latest technology can see the much-hyped site

BT introduces smartcards

Smartcards that will let workers log on to office networks from home are to be trialled by BT and Microsoft. The 500-person trial will begin early this year. The smartcard will allow people to access their office network from a PC or laptop using a simple PIN.

In the future it is hoped the cards will be developed for other applications, such as access to buildings, electronic transactions, online banking, e-cash and customer loyalty programmes.

"Smartcards are going to be an important tool for businesses wanting to exploit e-commerce and Internet opportunities," said Steve Brown, head of smartcards at BT.

www.bt.com

At home
In business
The world of BT
The internet
Can we help?
At your service
As advertised

Welcome to BT

Our site will help you stay in touch, at home and at work. The list on the left opens up a range of possibilities. For example, you can order online, check your bill or find a phone number. Or you can simply keep up-to-date with the changing world of communications.
If you need any guidance, please go to "Using this site"

Access your account details easily
Register NOW

Already registered?
Log in NOW

● BT is about to make the use of smartcards for work a reality

Time line

19 January

The future of mobile computing or the best-hyped story for years? Today secretive Silicon Valley startup Transmeta will reveal details of its Crusoe processor. Backed by Paul Allen and with Linux inventor Linus Torvalds on staff, Transmeta has got a lot of publicity but delivered nothing so far.

www.transmeta.com

20 January

Everybody cares about network security. But do you care enough to travel all the way to Pittsburgh for the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) one day seminar on Concepts and Trends in Information Security? Of course you don't – so you'll just have to hope the hackers aren't interested in your network. At least you can visit the CERT site and subscribe to its newsletter

www.cert.org

Carnegie Mellon
Software Engineering Institute

ISP ROUND-UP

■ Freeserve has released a new CD that is Mac compatible. The success of the iMac has helped persuade the company to support both platforms. Around half all iMacs sold go to people new to computing. Freeserve has also entered the e-commerce market with its own shopping area (www.freeserve.net /shopping). The retailers include eToys, Books OnLine (BOL) and, naturally, Dixons.

www.freeserve.net

■ **Following the pattern of pretty much every other 0800 service, 08004U has run into trouble early on, The company discovered that its 0800 dial-up numbers had been distributed on the Internet and were being abused. It's had to change its contract conditions and tie the contracts to individual caller identification details.**

www.08004u.co.uk

■ The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is the first UK professional body to become an ISP. It plans to launch a range of services for its 250,000 members, starting with free Internet access through ACCANet. The service is backed by Cable & Wireless.

www.acca.org.uk

■ **Planet Online, a major site host and part of the Energis group, is championing a new streaming video and audio system from Geo Interactive. The Emblaze system uses Java and doesn't need a plug-in. The plan is to bring streaming video to a wider audience.**

www.theplanet.net

■ Powergen has come up with an unusual incentive for Internet users. Its new ISP offers users a discount on their Powergen gas or electricity bills. An hour a day on the Internet works out at £22 a year off energy bills.

www.powergen.com

Welcome to Seriously Easy E-COMMERCE

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100Mb fast UK webspace, all domain fees, www.yourname.co.uk, POP3 email, unlimited addresses, auto-responders, announcement lists, CGI-bin + pre-installed scripts, Frontpage extensions, support for PHP3, MySQL, RealAudio, fast responsive tech support, online help & web-based Virtual Control Panel

PLUS ALL THIS!

Miva shopping cart, installed, licensed & ready to run. This inexpensive business soltuions includes integrated secure server access, web-based admin interface, unlimited products and categories, customisable look and feel, integration to existing site, ease of use, online help. Be up and running today

YOU CAN BE SELLING ONLINE IN 1 HOUR!

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0115 9170000

VERHEARD → "Tony Blair is impotent." Another classic headline from The Register. It's about an adviser telling Blair to embrace the Net or risk appearing "impotent and irrelevant"

HotDownloads

ON THE CD

As a special New Year treat, **Greg Sloman** looks back over the past 12 months and picks the programs you shouldn't be without. Plus the Hot Download of '99

HOTLIST

Top 10 Shareware Archives

TUCOWS www.tucows.com
Online since 1993 and with mirrored sites all around the world, TUCOWS has tons of software for Mac and PC users alike. There's also a handy rating system of all the products available.

WinFiles www.winfiles.com
A huge searchable library of 32-bit shareware, drivers, features and tips. Windows software only.

Shareware www.shareware.com
CNet's home on the Web has reviews and related links to its comprehensive shareware archive.

Macdownload www.macdownload.com
Independent reviews, star ratings and a huge collection of utilities and apps for your Mac.

DaveCentral www.davecentral.com
Dave's huge repository of downloadable goodies, featuring his own pick of the week's releases.

Downloads www.hotfiles.com
Run by IT specialists ZDNET, DOWNLOADS has games, utilities, freebies and commercial demos all independently reviewed.

Updates www.updates.com
Check to see if you need any updates by visiting updates.com – an excellent resource for your all your shareware patches, updates and bug fixes.

BrowserWatch http://browserwatch.internet.com
BrowserWatch is a leading site for information about browsers, plug-ins and ActiveX controls. You'll also find a complete list of all the different plug-ins for your browser here.

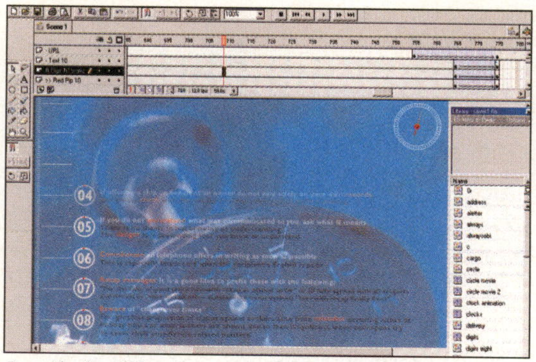
FileMine www.filemine.com
FileMine does head-to-head reviews of products, covering general-purpose software, games and Net utilities. Worth checking for its daily hot download.

SlaughterHouse www.slaughterhouse.com
Daily reviews, updates and technology news of Windows software downloads.

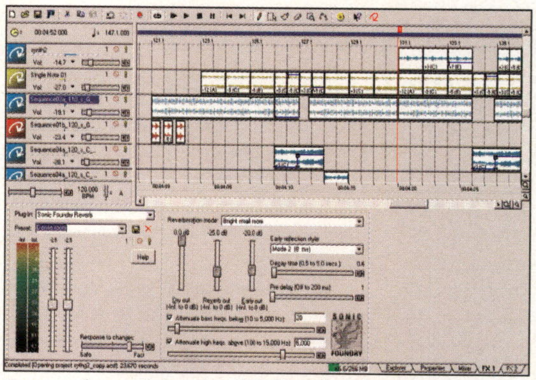
Looking back over the past year, a number of our Hot Downloads have been freeware, which just shows that the spirit of goodwill is on the Net 365 days of the year. In this special edition of Hot Downloads we've put together the best of '99, as well as a few that didn't make it due to lack of space.

First up is **HTMLib**, the reference library for all useable HTML code – a readable language reference sporting examples, a comparison table on browser support, a style sheet and DHTML scripting reference, all cross-referenced.

Now you know a bit of HTML, you'll need more than Notepad to put your site together. You won't go far wrong with Macromedia's **Dreamweaver**, which includes Allaire's excellent **HomeSite** (Win) or **BBEdit** (Mac). Both packages are great hand-coding tools. Not far behind are **Fusion** and **GoLive**, NetObject's and Adobe's respective spins on DTP-style Web site creation. Die-hard sharewarers should consider **CoffeeCup HTML Editor 98**, **Freeway** or **Arachnophilia**.


For authoring Web pages, you could do worse than Dreamweaver

Why not try **Macromedia Flash**, the *de facto* king of vector animation on the Web. If you've used the drawing tools in Windows Paint and have a modicum of artistic ability Flash is a versatile, easy to use program. Even when you've added MP3 files, your animations will fly. The plug-in issue is almost a non-issue now, and anyway, Microsoft's slick IE5 will auto-install it if it isn't loaded already. AOL's Navigator version 5 comes with Flash pre-installed.


For ease of use and sheer fun, ACID Music is the Hot Download of '99

When you're sorting out your site's graphics you need a feature-rich editor that's intuitive and optimises your images for fast downloading. Fighting it out for market share are **Photoshop**, an all-purpose print and new media editor, and **Fireworks**, a dedicated Web graphics tool. We gave PhotoShop 5.5 our Best Buy in October '99, and rightly so. It's probably the best package around. You get image mapping, slicing, optimisation, photo touch-up, filters and actions including free-stuff, help and tutorials on the Net.

The Net lets shareware authors write software which doesn't feature in standard apps. Some of them are indispensable when you're setting up your site. You have heaps of options for optimising and validating your HTML – check TUCOWS (**www.tucows.com**) for details. Recommended gadgets include **HTML PowerTools**, the Swiss Army knife of Web tools for the PC, and **VSE HTML Turbo** for the MAC. Want to set up a colour scheme for your Web pages? **ColorStudio Professional** got top billing in November. To create spinning 3D logos use **XARA 3D**. Ulead's **GIF Animator** has loads of functions and optimisation wizards. If you're including photos, you'll need to optimise your JPEGs. **JPEG Optimizer** or **CyberView Image Pro** take the pain out of shrinking file sizes to acceptable levels.

To test how your pages will appear in different resolutions use freeware **BrowserSizer** or **AgWindowWatch**. As most Web servers are UNIX-based, you'll need a user-friendly way of talking to them – we like **CuteFTP**. Finally, to get your site noticed, **TagGen** is an excellent tool that'll help

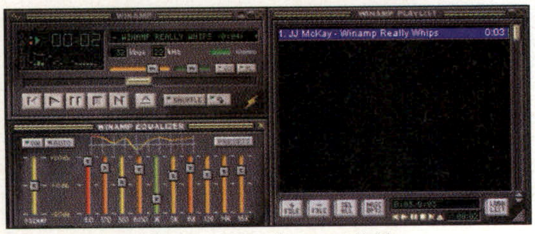
OVERHEARD → "We have built the site with new browser and modem demographics in mind." A Boo.com spokeswoman tells us why her site doesn't work.

Hot Downloads of the year

Product	Price	Platform	Size	Web Site
HTML Stuff				
HTMLib	Free	W9x/NT	3Mb	www.htmlib.com
Dreamweaver	$269	W9x/NT/Mac	10.7Mb	www.macromedia.com
HomeSite	$99	W9x/NT	8.10Mb	www.allaire.com
BBEdit	$119	Mac	4Mb	www.barebones.com
NetObjects Fusion	$299.95	W9x/NT	23.2Mb	www.netobjects.com
GoLive	£210	W9x/NT/Mac	20Mb	www.adobe.com
CoffeeCup HTML Editor	$60	W9x/NT/Linux	6.7Mb	www.coffeecup.com
Freeway	£199	Mac	5.4Mb	www.softpress.com
Arachnophilia	Free	W9x/NT	1.6Mb	www.arachnoid.com
Graphics Stuff				
Flash	£304	W9x/Mac	10.4Mb	www.macromedia.com
Photoshop	£499	W9x/NT/Mac	26.6Mb	www.adobe.com
Fireworks	£210	W9x/Nt/Mac	10.8Mb	www.macromedia.com
Paint Shop Pro	$99	W9x/NT	6.8Mb	www.jasc.com
Painter	£290	W9x/NT/Mac	8Mb	www.metacreations.com
CorelDRAW	£464	W9x/NT		www.corel.com
Utilities and Gadgets				
HTML PowerTools	$59.95	Win3.x/W9x/NT	4.2Mb	www.tali.com
VSE HTML Turbo	$50	Mac	976kb	http://vse-online.com
ColorStudio Professional	$24	W9x/NT	2.8Mb	www.newmediacafe.com
Xara3D	$39	W9x/NT	937kb	www.xara.com/xara3d
GIF Animator	$39.95	W9x/NT		www.ulead.com
JPEG Optimizer	$29	W9x/NT	1.30Mb	www.xat.com
CyberView Image Pro	$29.95	W9x/NT	1.3Mb	www.cyberviewcd.com
BrowserSizer	Free	W9x/NT	469kb	www.applythis.com
AgWindowWatch	Free	W9x/NT	1.6Mb	www.agendumsoftware.com
CuteFTP	$39.95	Win3.x/W9x/NT		www.cuteftp.com
TagGen	$119	W9x/NT	7.6Mb	www.hisoftware.com
Aesop Award Submitter	Free	W9x/NT	1.19Mb	www.foreverweb.com
Music Stuff				
Audiograbber	Free	W9x/NT	1.08Mb	www.audiograbber.com-us.net
MP3SPY	Free	W9x	1Mb	www.mp3spy.com
Spinner	Free	W9x/Mac	1.37Mb	www.spinner.com
WinAmp	$10	W9x/NT	1.8Mb	www.winamp.com
MacAmp	£25	Mac		www.macamp.net
RealJukeBox	Free	W9x/NT	5.6Mb	www.real.com
Sonique	Free	W9x/NT	2.4Mb	www.sonique.com
ACID	$99.95	W9x/NT	1.3Mb	www.sonicfoundry.com

promote your site in search engine rankings, and **Aesop Award Submitter** might just get those agencies knocking at your door.

We've featured lots of Net music programs since MP3s appeared. Listening to real-time audio over the Net is best with tracker software such as **MP3SPY** or **Spinner**. MP3SPY uses **WinAmp** or **MacAmp** for playing MP3 files and Spinner uses Real Audio's **RealJukebox** engine. Win/MacAmp's great interface is only bettered by the freeware **Sonique**. When you want to 'rip' audio from a variety of sources for your MP3 portable player, **Audiograbber**'s a safe bet. If you want to create original MP3 music our pick is **ACID Music**. It uses WAV loops which you can assemble into tracks. For ease of use and sheer fun factor we're going to make ACID Music our Hot Download of 1999.



1. JJ McKay - Winamp Really Whips 0:03

WinAmp is one of the better MP3 players available

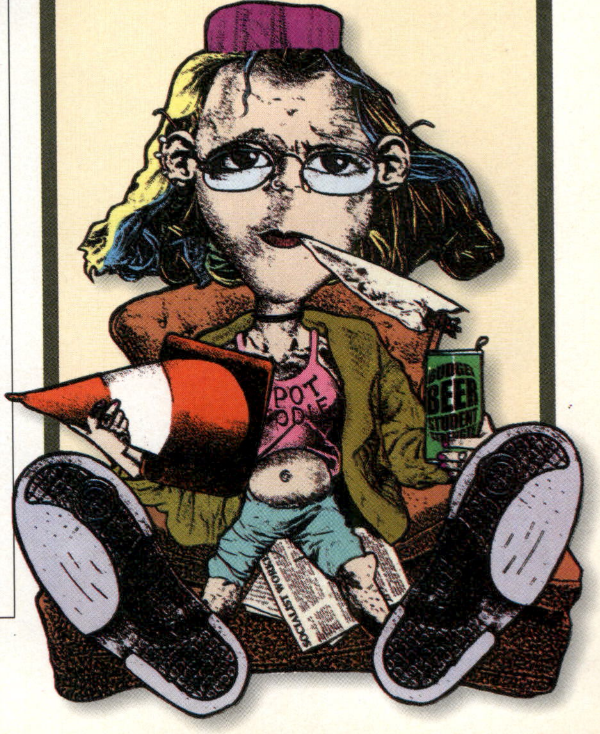
As for recommending the best browser, as a novice or expert Web developer, you should use them all.

It's a safe bet there'll be a lot of new stuff to review and recommend over the next 12 months. If you want a ringside seat on the latest innovations and the best products for downloading, check out Hot Downloads each month. Don't miss out.

SMILEY GUIDE TO INTERNET USERS

HOTTOAST

AGE: Nubile 18-year-olds straight out of sixth form.
APPEARANCE: Scruffy. Jeans and T-shirt for obscure band. Long hair (both sexes). Wearing a silly hat for their graduation ceremony.
HANGOUTS: The student union bar where they're typically seen drinking 'pound a pint' Fosters lager from a plastic beer glass, on the doorstep of nightclubs trying to obtain discounts with their NUS card, and in the college computer lab. Might occasionally attend a lecture (just for a laugh).
KNOWN ASSOCIATES: The 70 year old lecturer who has been trying to get them into bed all term. Members of the Socialist Worker's Party.
LIKES: Complaining about how poor they are, free Web-based email accounts, The Verve, Pot Noodles, cheap beer, plagiarising essays from the Net, smoking dope, and student nights at the local Ritzy nightclub.
HATES: The Government, the thought of working for a living, TV detector vans, going to bed alone.
PHILOSOPHY: Hinduism, Buddhism, logical positivism, dualism and naturism.
IN OTHER WORDS: Anything my mate said last night when I was pissed.
LATEST FAD: Using the Net to order pizzas and phoning *Internet Magazine* to request help with their thesis.
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "What do we want? [Insert latest cause here]. When do we want it? Now!"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY: "Get a job"
MORE FROM: www.hot-toast.com



OVERHEARD "Go virtually anywhere." A Travelocity online banner ad. Some companies promise anything to get people to visit their sites

NOKIA 7710e

PRICE £130
CONTACT Orange
TEL (0500) 80080
www.orange.co.uk/phones

It's a world first and it's here in the UK. A full WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) mobile phone.

It's been possible to pick up simple text messages and emails on a range of mobiles for a while now, but usually through custom software and specialist protocols. That's better than nothing, but it's a bit like what we had to put up with before VHS video recording came along. Lots of competition and plenty of confusion to go with it.

WAP is the agreed standard that Ericsson, Motorola and Nokia dreamed up in 1997 to put an end to this mess. Now, thanks to Orange, UK customers can get the world's first true media phone and use it to view Internet services and text information.

There's no way you can squeeze regular Web pages onto the tiny screen of a mobile, so the services on offer from Orange are tailored to fit. The media services will include news, traffic and travel information, entertainment listings and business directories, all viewed on a small microbrowser. In the near future, Orange expects to take even more advantage of this crossover technology, and add extra goodies such as maps that show the way to your bank's nearest ATM.

At the same time as launching the new phone, Orange has become the first UK mobile telecoms company to become an ISP. Even if you don't join up with orange.net (**www.orange.net**) you'll still be able to use a personal account on the Internet to control bits of your phone such as email alerts and filtering – and pay your phone bills.

The future looks bright. The future looks WAP. And you can buy the future right now for just £130.

NOKIA
Orange
Services
Select
Back
1
2abc
3def
5jkl

NOKIA
NOKIA
1
2 abc
3 def
4 ghi
5 jkl
6 mno
8 tuv

Photograph courtesy of Nokia

Britain's first 100% FREE ISP dedicated to high-speed ISDN and BT HomeHighway customers.

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OVERHEARD → "Glitter did not use the system. If he had, he probably would not have been caught." The Times on the use of encryption techniques by paedophiles

TRENDSPOTTING

Oursurveysays...

You should never underestimate the need for e-commerce sites to build strong brand identities. A batch of recent surveys backs up the need for a well-known name

In the US, the Myers Group (**www.myersgroup.com**) attempted to rate 70 media brands, both online and offline and it found that AOL ranked higher than most of the major television networks.

In a questionnaire returned by over 6,000 cable and satellite household subscribers, respondents were asked to rate 26 brand attributes. Based on these attributes, AOL emerged as the seventh most powerful media brand in the US. It even beat popular broadcasters like Fox TV and NBC.

The Myers Group puts the results down to AOL's strong brand identity and the increasing time people spend using the Net compared to other forms of media.

This is supported by a survey from the Communications Industry Forecast (CIF) by Veronis, Suhler & Associates. It predicts that in the US in 2003, 10 hours a day will be spent using media, of which, 5.4 hours will be spent online.

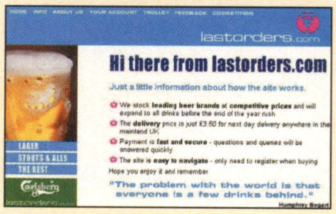
Consumption patterns are changing too – media supported by advertising (defined as TV, radio and magazines) are losing time to media supported by consumers (such as the Net, cable TV, books, movies and video games). The latter has increased by 42.3 per cent in the last five years, while time spent on advertisement-supported media has decreased by 10.2 per cent.

But, it seems that startups in UK and Europe are not doing a great job at marketing their brands. Research from Media Metrix (**www.mediametrix.com**) has found that at least one third of top Web sites in three major countries in Europe were US Web brands. In the survey of 3,000 Internet users across Europe, Microsoft, MSN, Yahoo, Altavista, AOL, Netscape and Geocities were in the top 25 most visited sites in Germany, France and Britain.

In the UK, brands such as Altavista, Amazon, Excite, Geocities, Hotmail, Microsoft, Netscape, Yahoo! and Tripod figured high up the list. The BBC, Demon, Freeserve, LineOne and Virgin were some of UK brands that featured low down the list.

Additionally, the Media Metrix survey found that the average German user clicked through 185 pages, while in Britain users clicked through an average of 157 pages. British surfers use the Net more often, totalling 8.4 days per month on average compared to eight days in Germany and 7.2 in France. In the US the figure is 11.7 days.

:-) Lager, Lager, Lager


HOME INFO ABOUT US YOUR ACCOUNT TROLLEY FEEDBACK COMPETITION
lastorders.com
LAGER
STOUTS & ALES
THE REST
Carlsberg

Hi there from lastorders.com

Just a little information about how the site works.

- We stock **leading beer brands at competitive prices** and will expand to all drinks before the end of the year rush
- The **delivery** price is just £3.50 for next day delivery anywhere in the mainland UK
- Payment is **fast and secure** - questions and queries will be answered quickly
- The site is **easy to navigate** - only need to register when buying

Hope you enjoy it and remember

"The problem with the world is that everyone is a few drinks behind."
Humphrey Bogart

With your local closing at 11(ish) and off-licenses shutting even earlier, it's no fun being thirsty late at night in England. Thankfully, Lastorders.com gives you the chance to buy cases of lager online. Hoorah! When we visited the site, a case of 20 Grolsch cost just £10 – a bargain! Not surprisingly, Lastorders.com is targeted at a male, fairly laddish audience, so there are plenty of pictures of scantily clad women dotted around the site. Not to be out done, Oddbins has started selling champagne online from its considerably more up-market Web site, with not a woman (scantily clad or otherwise) in sight...

www.lastorders.com
www.oddbins.co.uk

Microsoft loses Net message war

Microsoft has lost its battle to control instant messaging. With the growth of mobile communication devices, a system that lets two people chat in real time over the Net, is tipped to become one of the killer applications of the future.

In July, Microsoft announced its new, free MSN Messenger software, which will let you send text notes to another Messenger user – and to anyone with AOL's long-established Instant Messenger (IM) system.

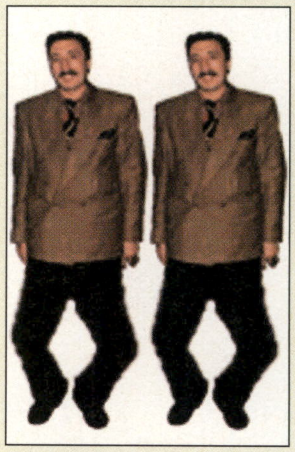
AOL responded by blocking access to its system and a war began, with the companies issuing new statements every few days.

Now, Microsoft has released version 2.0 of MSN Messenger, and declared it will no longer link up with AOL users because of a bug in AOL's code, which it does not want to pass on to loyal Microsoft users.

AOL welcomed the announcement, and denied that its software contained bugs. Microsoft took the opportunity to call for a world standard on instant communication systems, so that all competing networks could exchange messages without problems. In the UK, LineOne and CompuServe also run separate instant messaging services.

www.msn.co.uk
www.aol.co.uk

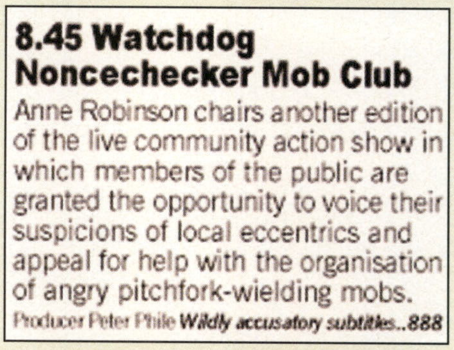
THE WILD, WILD WEB



■ You may be remembering that a few monthes ago we dedicate a whole of Wild Wild Web to dancing hampsters (sic). Following the internationale fame of Turkish lothario Mahir Cagri and his computation machina hacked site, where he invitate girls go his home and revealed he like take foto camera of animals and nice nude model, we are having the dancing Mahirs. I like to dance!

www.hamsterdance.com
http://members.xoom.com/_XOOM/mahirdance/getdown.html

■ **If the winter schedule of the *Radio Times* looks like a repeat of last year or over-Dickensian, then take a trip to TV Go Home. Here you'll find an amazing assortment of alternative programming, from the sublime Mick Hucknall's pink pancakes to the unprintable game show based on Blind Date featuring Harvey Keitel reprising his role from Bad Lieutenant. Our own Mark Whitehead was responsible for some of the content, so it's not for the easily shocked.**



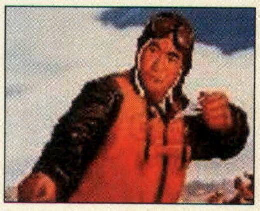
8.45 Watchdog Noncechecker Mob Club
Anne Robinson chairs another edition of the live community action show in which members of the public are granted the opportunity to voice their suspicions of local eccentrics and appeal for help with the organisation of angry pitchfork-wielding mobs.
Producer Peter Phile *Wildly accusatory subtitles*..888

www.tvgohome.com

■ Every now and again, a site comes along that makes you wonder how much time people have on their hands. Although this site could be quite useful as it helps you find things that are lost. We can't quite make out whether this is a serious site or not, although the inclusion of lost 2p coins probably swings it in for the Mickey-takers. If it is serious, will anyone reclaim the photos?

www.lost-something.co.uk

■ **Ever wanted to adorn your PC with Chinese Propaganda posters? Well, here's your chance. Jan Van der Ven has collected together an amazing array of wallpaper, from architecture and revolutionary rhetoric to people and village life (sadly not life and village people).**



http://worldwall.com

November 99
internet
magazine
ISP of the Month

“For the first time in the history of our tests, a free service has come top of the ranking. Many congratulations to Cable & Wireless Internet Lite.”

c&www.thankyou

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www.cwcom.net

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You understand your products and market. We understand the Internet. Together we can create a tailored solution for all your E-mail, E-commerce and Internet needs.

With the increasing pace of change in the world of the web, it is easy to feel left out and left behind. But now the right sort of help is at hand.

At Magic Moments we have our own network and our own resources. We provide mission critical Internet services to some of the best known names in business and we can do the same for you - simply, efficiently and cost effectively.

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1696.251297.27898
Domain Names Hosting Solutions E-commerce Web Design Database Integration Host Provider

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All our Email and Web Hosting packages also include: domain name registration or transfer, daily backups, Smart UPS and technical support.

ALL packages come with FREE Internet connection which benefits Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

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Magic EBasic **£40pa**
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- Single Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic EPlus **£75pa**
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- 10 POP Email boxes
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Multiple Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

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- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Standard **£155pa**
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- Unlimited Email addresses
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- Multiple Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

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NT Frontpage, SQL, ASP, CGI	£330pa

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Domain Names Hosting Solutions E-commerce Web Design Database Integration Host Provider

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- 75 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 15 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

£10 from this package is contributed to charitable causes. Charities include: NSPCC, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Imperial Cancer Trust. Details: http://www.magic-moments.com/charity/

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- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- SSL secure server
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

E-commerce Services

E-commerce solutions	from £65 pa

Other Services

Additional web/hosting space (10MB)	£25 pa
Database facilities	from £200 pa
Filemaker Pro database hosting	from £200 pa

Naming Authority Fees

UK domains (.co.uk, .org.uk)	£5
Global domains (.com, .org, .net)	£45
Ireland domain (.ie)	£95

Based on two years fees. Fees are subject to change without notice due to fluctuations in exchange rates.

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Freephone: 0808 100 6200 **www.magic-moments.com**

All trademarks and registered trademarks acknowledged. All packages exclude VAT where applicable and are subject to change without prior notice.

SITES FROM A SMALL ISLAND

For the best regional news and information, you wouldn't read a national newspaper, you'd keep it local. Richard Dinnick discovers the same is true of sites, with This is Britain

Before the Net, if you wanted to find out about another part of the country, you'd have to go there. If it was a job, a house or even a car you were after, you'd have looked in newsagents' windows, dropped into local estate agents or gone to the library to check out the classified ads.

With the Web, you can now do most of this online, going from site to site – one for property, another for local news and a third for jobs. And you'd then have to search for an entirely different set of sites to look in another county or region. But not any more.

January 2000
internet magazine
Site of the Month

Since November 1999, one network of sites has existed that will let you do all this in a few clicks. The primary hub is called This is Britain (TIB), although there are two other major components to the network – Fish 4, which lets you hunt for jobs, cars and homes, and a business directory called Fish 4 It.

This is confusing

Each of these components is a separate company, made up of a different combination of shareholders. The main hub, This Is Britain, is made up of Associated New Media (**www.associated.co.uk**), Trinity Mirror (**www.mirrorgroup.co.uk**), the country's largest newspaper group, Newsquest Media (**www.newsquest.co.uk**), Northcliffe Newspapers (**www.dmgt.co.uk**), and Guardian Media Group Regional Newspapers.

The service also has subscribers – Cumbrian Newspapers, Regional & Independent Media and Bristol United Press – known as regional franchisees. On these sites, the shareholders hold a huge number of 'this is' domain names. However, a few of the sites – such as Manchester Online – have been around for a while and don't carry the branding.

The big regional shareholders of This is Britain are also shareholders of Fish4 sites along with Bristol United Press and Regional & Independent Media. Developed from the former ADHunter sites — PropertyHunter, JobHunter and AutoHunter — Fish4 is expected to secure a respectable share of the market in the sectors they cover.

Finally, the business directory Fish 4 It (**www.fish4it.co.uk**), is three of the partnership's key players: Trinity Mirror, Newsquest Media, and Northcliffe Newspapers. Got that?

The chief executive is Jonathan Turpin, a man well versed in keeping different parts of a complicated organisation together. "Our chairman says I'm the first ever serial chief executive," he jokes. "I was Beeb's commercial director and if you come into to manage a six-way joint venture company, you need someone political. The BBC is a good background for learning to manage complex organisations.

Turpin says the clear purpose of each company makes his job less difficult than managing the various bits of the BBC. "The shareholders understand where they want to be," he says. "They know that we are changing the model of what we do from a simple classified business to a full service activity."

This is how it works

The TIB/Fish4 team works across all three sites. "It's managed as a single business, which means we can integrate the sites more closely," explains Turpin. "The advantage we have is that if you're looking for a home, you probably want to know more about the local area. So people using the Fish4Homes service can draw on TIB. Because we've got these wonderful sources of local information, we have great strength in being able to give people that sort of support in a purchase decision."

THIS IS BRITAIN

www.thisisbritain.co.uk

For its sheer breadth of national and local news, community coverage and searchable databases, This is Britain is our Site of the Month

DESIGNERS
In-house

DEVELOPMENT TIME
Four months

COST
Less than £100,000, but approximately £2 million will be spent over the next year.

SIZE
Approximately 1Gb

NUMBER OF PAGES
Most of the pages on the site are dynamically generated, so impossible to say

LAUNCHED
November 1999

The TIB hub also acts as an online gateway to a network of 81 regional sites, representing over 80 per cent of the UK's regional press. Like *Internet Magazine*'s Site of the Year, Up My Street (**www.upmystreet.co.uk**), you can enter your postcode to find the best local site for you. Alternatively you can search by city, region, or by clicking on the required area on a map of Britain.

TIB already has the Fish 4 It business directory delivered through the community sites, which includes a mapping facility. "This information is still in an embryonic state and we'll be working to make it much slicker and more effective," Turpin continues.

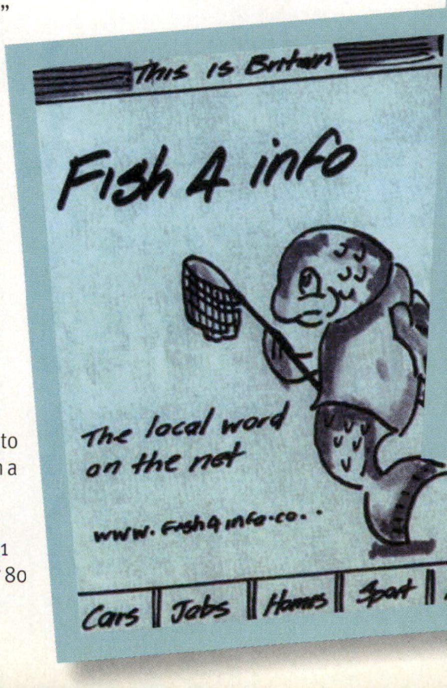
This is Britain will also run a frequently updated regional news and sports service. It delivers the top stories of the day and regional headlines on topics such as football, health, business, people and 'heartwarmers' – such as heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis helping a hospital to raise money.

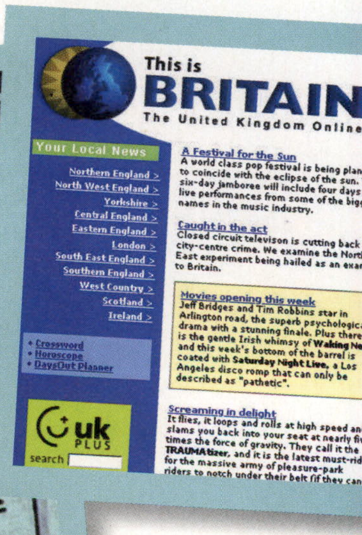
"Our aim is to make the TIB network the first place people go to on the Web to find anything local," says Turpin.

This is what it does

The design of each community site is down to the individual partners, but

»




This is BRITAIN
The United Kingdom Online

Your Local News
- Northern England >
- North West England >
- Yorkshire >
- Central England >
- Eastern England >
- London >
- South East England >
- Southern England >
- West Country >
- Scotland >
- Ireland >

- Crossword
- Horoscope
- DaysOut Planner

uk PLUS
search

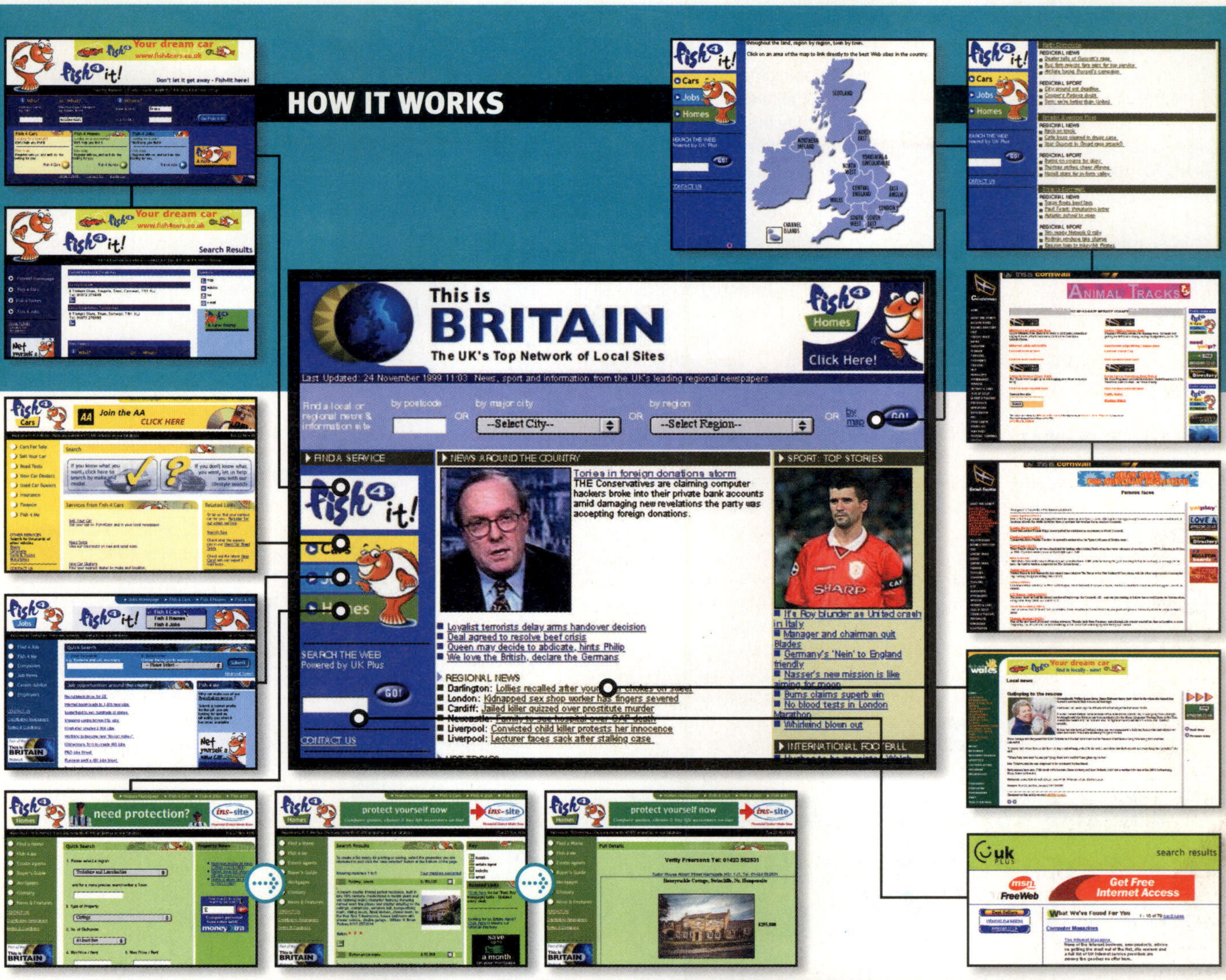
A Festival for the Sun
A world class pop festival is being plan to coincide with the eclipse of the sun. six-day jamboree will include four days live performances from some of the bigg names in the music industry.

Caught in the act
Closed circuit televison is cutting back city-centre crime. We examine the Nort East experiment being hailed as an exa to Britain.

Movies opening this week
Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins star in Arlington road, the superb psychologic drama with a stunning finale. Plus there is the gentle Irish whimsy of **Waking Ne** and this week's bottom of the barrel is coated with **Saturday Night Live**, a Los Angeles disco romp that can only be described as "pathetic".

Screaming in delight
It flies, it loops and rolls at high speed an slams you back into your seat at nearly fi times the force of gravity. They call it the **TRAUMAtizer**, and it is the latest must-rid for the massive army of pleasure-park riders to notch under their belt (if they can

HOW IT WORKS



This is
BRITAIN
The UK's Top Network of Local Sites

fish4 Homes Click Here!

Last Updated: 24 November 1999 11:03 News, sport and information from the UK's leading regional newspapers

Find a local or regional news & information site by postcode OR by major city --Select City-- OR by region --Select Region-- OR by map GO!

FIND A SERVICE

fish4it!
Cars
Jobs
Homes

SEARCH THE WEB
Powered by UK Plus
GO!

CONTACT US

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Tories in foreign donations storm
THE Conservatives are claiming computer hackers broke into their private bank accounts amid damaging new revelations the party was accepting foreign donations.

- Loyalist terrorists delay arms handover decision
- Deal agreed to resolve beef crisis
- Queen may decide to abdicate, hints Philip
- We love the British, declare the Germans

REGIONAL NEWS
- Darlington: Lollies recalled after young[illegible] chokes on sweet
- London: Kidnapped sex shop worker has fingers severed
- Cardiff: Jailed killer quizzed over prostitute murder
- Newcastle: Family to sue hospital over GAP death
- Liverpool: Convicted child killer protests her innocence
- Liverpool: Lecturer faces sack after stalking case

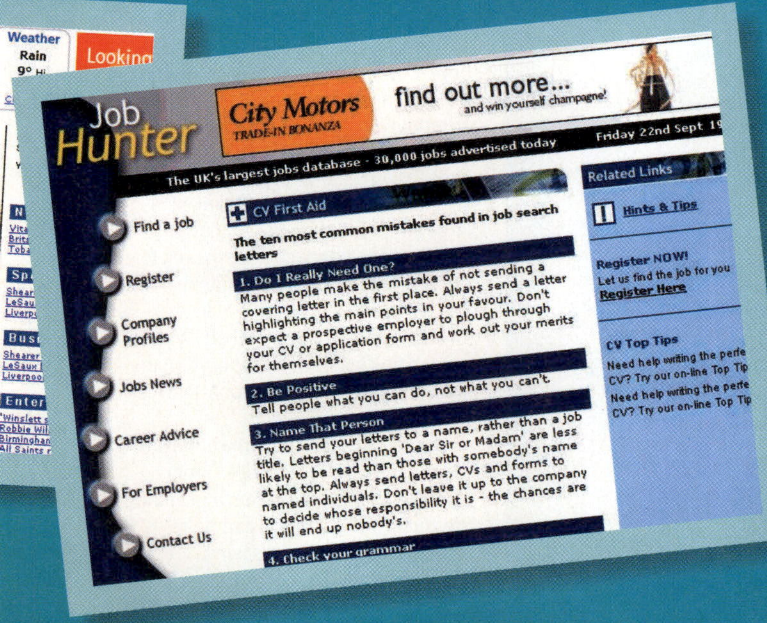
SPORT: TOP STORIES
- It's Roy blunder as United crash in Italy
- Manager and chairman quit Blades
- Germany's 'Nein' to England friendly
- Nasser's new mission is like aiming for moon
- Burns claims superb win
- No blood tests in London Marathon
- Whirlwind blown out

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

DESIGN PROFILE

This is Britain/Fish4

The companies were set up at the beginning of 1999, specifically to handle the design, strategy and implementation of the nationwide network of local data Web sites that constitute This is Britain, Fish4It and Fish4. With 16 employees, the company will shortly be expanding, taking on extra staff to implement the next stage of the network's development.



The UK's largest jobs database - 30,000 jobs advertised today

Friday 22nd Sept 19

- Find a job
- Register
- Company Profiles
- Jobs News
- Career Advice
- For Employers
- Contact Us

CV First Aid

The ten most common mistakes found in job search letters

1. Do I Really Need One?
Many people make the mistake of not sending a covering letter in the first place. Always send a letter highlighting the main points in your favour. Don't expect a prospective employer to plough through your CV or application form and work out your merits for themselves.

2. Be Positive
Tell people what you can do, not what you can't.

3. Name That Person
Try to send your letters to a name, rather than a job title. Letters beginning 'Dear Sir or Madam' are less likely to be read than those with somebody's name at the top. Always send letters, CVs and forms to named individuals. Don't leave it up to the company to decide whose responsibility it is - the chances are it will end up nobody's.

4. Check your grammar

Related Links

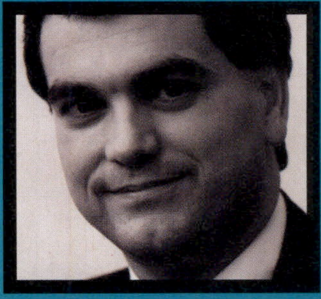
Hints & Tips

Register NOW!
Let us find the job for you
Register Here

CV Top Tips
Need help writing the perfe
CV? Try our on-line Top Tip
Need help writing the perfe
CV? Try our on-line Top Tip

Jonathan Turpin

Jonathan Turpin became chief executive of This is Britain in July 1999. He joined from Beeb.com, where he was commercial director. Turpin previously worked as a business development manager for BBC Worldwide, where he worked on the development of Beeb.com. Before that, he worked on both BBC Television and BBC Corporate Strategy.



"This site is primarily a search mechanism for finding the local sites and a digest of regional news and sports activity so that people interested in those subjects can find the relevant parts of those businesses."

Sue Falcke

Sue Falcke was general manager of ADHunter UK and Quartet Database Developments. Falcke, originally a journalist, worked in the regional press and ran her own newspaper, *The Congleton Express*, which was acquired by Reed Regional Newspapers in 1990. She moved into sales, marketing and then new media development in 1996, taking on a group role in 1998.

"These are complex sites we're dealing with. We have to take data in different formats from different sources and make meaningful, accurate searches out of them."

while there are no guidelines dished out by TIB, Turpin feels that it's inevitable there'll be a link between these sites and the central hub. "We specify basic criteria for the local sites in terms of performance and a range of content," he says. "I think over time things will come together as we learn what works. It'll evolve naturally."

"There will be an evolution all the way through," agrees Sue Falcke, This is Britain's operations director. "We're already evolving Fish 4 It. There are some redesign elements happening, adding three bits of functionality."

The difficulty for Falcke has been that the sites' different concepts evolved at different times. ADhunter – the service that became Fish 4 – was launched in 1996, while Quartet, the business directory that is now Fish 4 It – was set up at the end of 1997. The 'This is' network started in January 1998, and This is Britain came together at the end of 1998. It wasn't until July this year, with the arrival of Turpin, that the strategy started falling into place and a cohesive design was envisaged.

> **"I think the sites are great at the moment. In 12 months they'll be excellent."**

These complications were offset by bespoke ICL technology with its 'sniffer' system that automatically updates the home page. "The ICL technology is very impressive," Falcke comments. The software sends a number of sniffers to search the network of sites at different times of day. All the regional sites have their own publishing schedules, so a sniffer goes to one site every five minutes. One special sniffer then goes round every site hourly, checking to ensure no update is missed. The software then deletes any dead links and replaces them with new ones.

At the same time they deliver the editorial from the 96 sites to the three man TIB editing team. "If Leicester has just been updated, the editing team can have a look at the headlines and pick what they want from there," explains Falcke. "This is Britain's home page is updated about six times a day on weekdays and twice on weekends."

This is maintenance

Before Turpin arrived, there was no This is Britain and no national business directory. "I arrived with a clean sheet in terms of strategy and funding," he explains. "We went through the process of developing the strategy, agreeing the funding, defining the new brand, constructing the sites in parallel and building a marketing campaign."

The freelancers and contractors worked with the full-time team to design the sites so that almost any brand could be dropped into place. "The design took a week," admits Falcke. "By the time we'd finished discussing it, the designer was so in tune with what we wanted, that it was very quick!" Page development took another week.

The whole process took four months, while the design took five or six weeks. During this time, the companies only employed six full-time people. "And ICL were enormously helpful," Turpin adds.

The network's most amazing aspect is that it works automatically. The only thing the local sites have to do is put tags on their news stories. The rest is run by the sniffers.

This is making money

The Fish4 portfolio is the money-spinning side of the business. "TIB is similar to the local newspaper business model," Turpin says. "The content was always there to bring people into the money-making part of the business – the classified ads. News and sport are good traffic generators. That helps you build the user base and audience for the more cash-generating areas of the business."

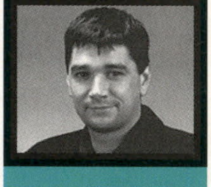
At the moment, its portfolio covers the business directory, Fish4It, a database of local businesses that can even tell you there's a taxidermist in Truro called Kenny Everett. But the mainstay of the classifieds type content comes from the other three Fish4 sites – Fish4Cars (**www.fish4cars.co.uk**), Fish4Jobs (**www.fish4jobs.co.uk**) and Fish4Homes (**www.fish4homes.co.uk**).

Fish4Cars has the largest database of used cars in the UK. Over 180,000 vehicles are listed, and the site also carries finance and insurance. Fish4Jobs will list an equally impressive number of ads, around 30,000 job vacancies in the UK. "We hope to be 100,000-200,000 sometime in 2000," Turpin says. Fish4Homes has 30,000 properties listed in seven key regions, and this number is expected to grow. The Fish4 group is aiming at total UK coverage.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Daniel Bonner
creative director
AKQA

This network is a quick and efficient example of the medium really enabling the consumer. Although the navigation element of the service lets it down a little (often a problem with networks), the function factor is high. Initial access to specific content on arrival at the home page is made simple by the use of geographical search devices (postcode, town, region) and the link to the Fish 4 It UK business and service search facility certainly adds value for the user. A quick, nationwide, one-stop shop service that delivers localised content is the secret to this network's success.
www.akqa.com



Aaron Chatterley
MD
SP NEW MEDIA

This is Britain is a truly great Web site. Function and form are carefully planned, together with ease of use clearly at the forefront of the developer's minds. The Fish4 area is obviously still growing and produced very few returns on my car and house searches. I was hoping the cars lifestyle search was going to find me a car based on just that – my lifestyle – but it really just asks what sort of car you want. I was expecting to be wowed by its intuition! That said, it's certainly going into my News Bookmarks folder alongside PA and CNN.
www.spnewmedia.co.uk

The Fish4 brand can be applied to several money-making aspects of e-commerce, and the future promises more launches. "I think small ads are the next inevitable step," Turpin admits. Fish4Bargains is already being tested by certain sites, including This is Cornwall.

The advantage, as far as the TIB team is concerned, is that they aren't limited by what newspapers can do.

"We can do a lot of things on the Web outside the traditional role of the newspaper, particularly when you get into activities that are difficult to do in a newspaper environment that actually work very well online," says Turpin.

This is what's next

The network has already attracted over 20 million page impressions a month, making it one of the top five online media services in the UK. "We've got work to do in terms of improving the quality of the editorial and bringing in more sophisticated content," Turpin says. "We've come a long way in four months, but there's still a lot to do."

The advantage the network has is that, by sharing the cost of its activities across the sites and shareholders, it can deliver a more sophisticated service. And this means huge investment – around £10 million – for the next stages, travel and tourism, as well as a mass marketing campaign and redesigns.

The first of these redesigns will happen some time around June 2000. "We've got to start building systems that are much slicker and faster, and it'll probably be the development of new underlying platforms that will drive the change in the front end," says Turpin.

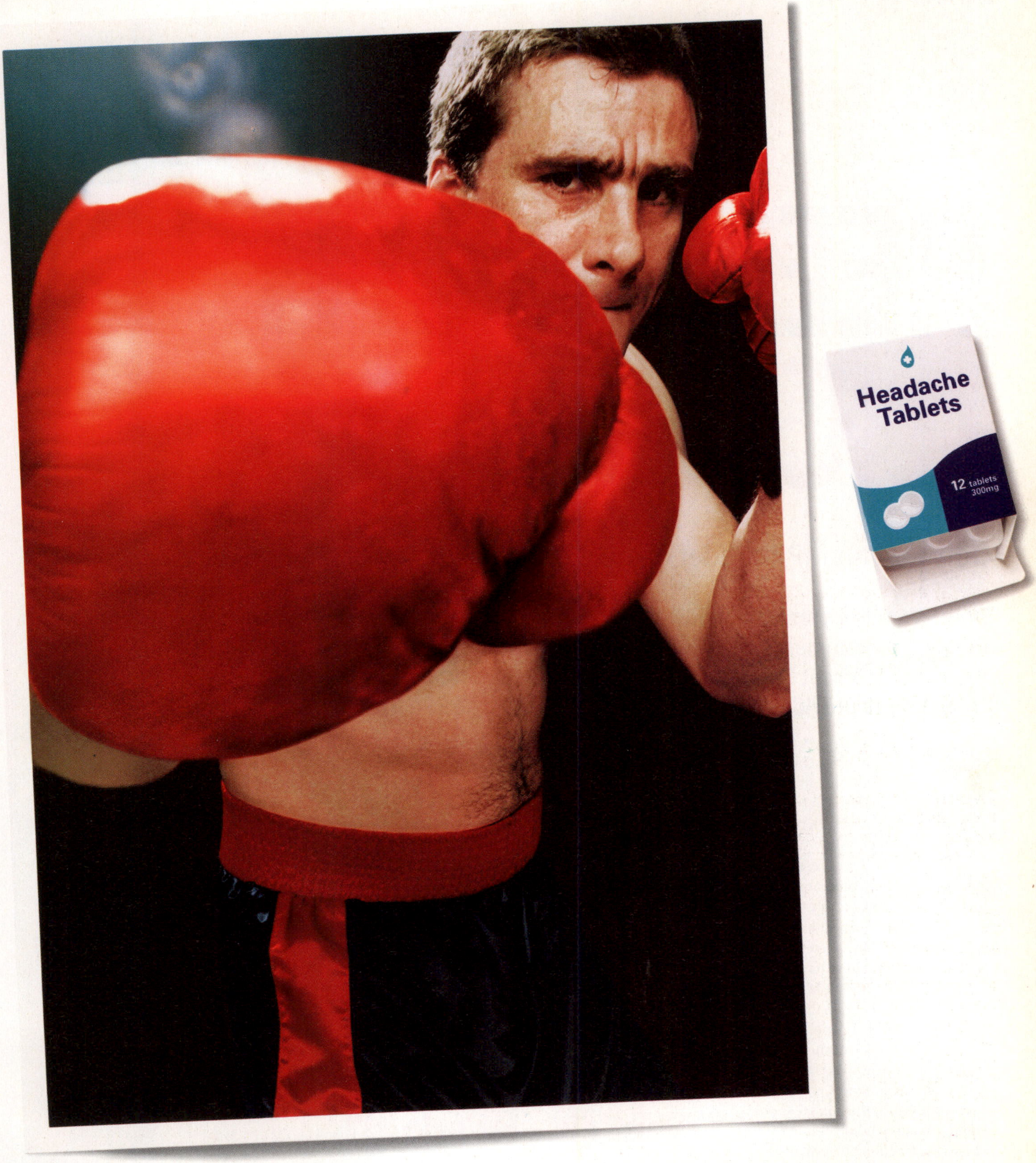
On top of its own content, the site will also be bringing in more local third party information. "I think the sites are great at the moment," Turpin says. "In 12 months they'll be excellent." The content's so good, it'll soon be available on Microsoft's UK portal (**www.msn.co.uk**) along with the Fish4 sites.

This will mean expansion, and the 16-strong workforce at TIB/Fish4 will have moved offices by the time you read this. The new offices will be able to take 70 employees, with space for the company to grow to 120. This expansion begs the question of profitability, the seemingly impossible goal of most large Internet companies. Although Turpin doesn't expect to see a profit for the first few years, he is confident of his empire's success.

"Ultimately the goal is that, if you want to find local information, you can go to This is Britain and, no matter what it is, you'll find it," he says.

"In a sense, the site is the opposite of what the Web does," says Turpin. "The Web is about going out and finding the global side of things, and we're turning that around and saying, 'come in locally, everything's here'." im

http://www.hp.com/go/drops
http://www.hp-expo.com



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REBEL WITH A CAUSE

Derek Wyatt MP, founder of the World Internet Forum

Derek Wyatt is a rare commodity – an MP who knows about the Internet. He believes governments need to improve their Internet strategy, so he's set up the World Internet Forum. Steve Hill meets the Labour politician who's urging Tony Blair to provide every family in the UK with a free PC to access the Net

On a recent trip to Cambridge, Tony Blair encouraged UK businesses to get online, but he struggled with the task of ordering flowers online for his wife. The Prime Minister confessed: "Like many people of my generation in positions of leadership, I rarely use a computer, and when I do, I usually need help." If only Tony had Derek Wyatt by his side, Cherie would've had her begonias delivered before she knew it.

But Wyatt's a rarity in the corridors of Westminster – he's a politician who knows about the Internet. He also claims to know how to get more people in the UK using the Net, and he hasn't been afraid to tell Blair all about it. Here's a clue – it involves free PCs for all and the creation of e-post offices.

At 50, Wyatt's nearly five years older than the Internet illiterate prime minister. He entered politics after the Conservative Party's victory in the 1992 election – "I thought the British people deserved better".

Wyatt was a teacher for 10 years, during which time he played rugby for England before going to Oxford University aged 32. After moving into journalism and progressing to the board of directors at Heinemann publishing, he went into television, becoming head of programmes at Live TV and founding .TV, BSkyB's computing channel.

As well as being a fierce critic of the Government's Internet strategy, Wyatt has locked horns with bosses at the BBC over the money being sunk into BBC Online, which he estimates to be in the region of £20-30 million.

"The Government treats the Internet like its health or transport department. Until people realise that the Net transcends the way government works, they won't understand it."

> **"I'd be batting for free computers. We could wire the nation overnight – let's do it!"**

"Governments around the world are organised in similar ways. At the top is a president, prime minister or dictator who's surrounded by cabinet ministers or secretaries of state that run the departments. The major problem is they're run on a vertical basis, but the Net is horizontal and affects all departments of government."

Wyatt argues that the Net has the potential to offer huge savings, as well as improving the way businesses interact with their customers.

"Cisco estimated that it cost $105 [around £68] to raise an invoice. An invoice cost the company 45¢ when it went electronic, saving $45 million [around £29 million] in the first year. The savings are breathtaking."

Wyatt's keen to show Tony Blair that this doesn't just apply to business, but to public bodies as well.

"How can we improve the delivery of housing benefit? Can we look into developing smart cards? How can we reduce the unit cost of delivery?

"People are always keen to shout about private ventures and their silly share prices, but far more money is spent delivering education, healthcare and social services around the world. We've yet to hear how the Net can affect the workings of government."

Wyatt has set up the World Internet Forum (www.icp.co.uk/wif), an international summit, to discuss these issues and to view examples of good practice in how governments use and implement digital technologies. »

Photography by Frank Rodgers

How did the idea come about? "I was having dinner with Tony Perkins of *Red Herring*, a US business and technology monthly. He'd just come back from the World Economic Forum in Dallas. I just said out of the blue that we needed a World Internet Forum."

Wyatt took his idea to niche consulting company ICP, which has a long track record in the management and execution of international events.

"We've booked Oxford University and raised £1 million. It was like an Internet startup to begin with, but now it's going at a rate of knots. New companies are joining us every week."

More than 1,000 delegates from the G8, developing countries and all the major trading blocs, will be invited to attend the summit, to be held in October 2000 at Oxford University. Vendors of Internet technology will meet with government officials, civil servants and other policy makers to discuss policy and do business. Wyatt says it'll be "a UN for the 21st century, but without the politics."

The World Internet Forum will also produce a magazine and a portal Web site that'll highlight examples of good practice around the world.

What are other countries doing that the UK can learn from? "Melbourne's been experimenting with kiosks that let people administer their social security online. Singapore has an excellent banking and taxation service. Helsinki has an advantage because a large percentage of its population is online."

Wyatt says the US is well ahead of the UK in using the Net as a tool for political campaigning.

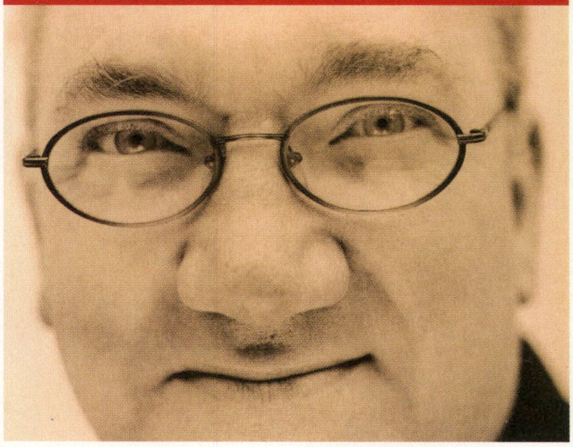
"I think the presidential elections will be the first elections to be Internet-led. I think the Net will dominate over other mediums, such as TV, radio and newspapers. I'm joining the Gore team in January to check out its Web-based information centre. I'm going to see if I can borrow it to defend my seat in Sittingbourne and Sheppey in 2002." Wyatt says several governments are considering plans to introduce online voting or referenda.

Wyatt points out that the Internet was a key player in spreading the news about the General Election, the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the Louise Woodward trial and President Clinton's sex scandal.

But if social services are to be delivered via the Net to the UK population, more people have to be using the Net. Only 10 million homes are online in the UK at the moment, and Wyatt believes this figure is far too low.

Curriculum Vitae

- Born 1949
- **1973** Started Open University course in art and architecture plus education
- **1981** Research in educational management at St Catherine's College, Oxford
- **1986** Director and a publisher of William Heinemann
- **1994** Head of programmes at WireTV
- **1995** Founder and director of The Computer Channel (now .TV) at BSkyB
- **1997** Elected MP for Sittingbourne & Sheppey, Kent
- **1997** Founded the All Party Internet Committee
- **1999** Founded the World Internet Forum



"We can't do anything until a Government department is in charge of the Internet."

"In 1989 I wrote an article in *The Times* about the race between BSB and Sky TV to launch satellite services. I argued that you couldn't get people to sign up to the service unless you gave away the equipment to access it for free. You could then charge people money to watch the programmes. BSB didn't understand this and lost out to Sky. The Government's making exactly the same mistake as this regarding the Internet today. Tony Blair wants people to sign up to Freeserve, which is great, but you need a PC to run the installation CD."

So what's the solution? Last month, chancellor Gordon Brown revealed plans to give 100,000 underpriveleged families the opportunity to rent refurbished PCs with Net access for as little as £5 a month. Wyatt has more radical plan – he wants the Government to give every family a free PC by 2002.

"We still have a lot of money left from the Millennium Project. People think we've spent all the cash on the Dome, but by 2002 we'll have around £4 billion to spend on other projects. I'd like to see an infrastructure fund created for the 21st century that might look into transport safety, air traffic control and the Internet. I'd be batting for free computers. We could wire the nation overnight – let's do it!"

The Government's said it'll open 1,000 computer centres. "We don't need them," says Wyatt. "We can get post offices to work electronically. Every post office should provide access to the Net and have a server that individuals and businesses can log onto and view information about benefits."

Wyatt believes the Internet holds the key to reskilling the nation. He says failure to get the public online could result in the biggest brain drain that Europe's ever experienced, the consequences of which would be high levels of unemployment.

"We need an Internet Minister in the Cabinet Office," says Wyatt. "Get Patricia Hewitt out of the DTI and get her into the Cabinet Office overseeing all the departments. We can't do anything until a single Government department is in charge of the Internet."

The next few months are going to be important for the Government. "Let's get electronic signatures through and then take a look at taxation. The Treasury needs to know where, and if, it can collect tax. The EU wants to tax at source, but tax on delivery is going to be difficult to administer. I phoned the Bank of England and asked to speak to its e-commerce advisor, but it couldn't even tell me who it was, which was rather worrying."

As Wyatt fights a one-man campaign for the Internet at Westminster, he's realistic about the chances of getting his proposal through.

"When they put the cables in for TV broadcasts, they sealed up the pipes. They didn't think MPs might want to use the Net! I arrived at the House of Commons two and a half years ago and it's taken that long for the Government to get its head around the Net.

"Having worked in various media organisations, I was astonished by its lack of a clear policy on the Net." Wyatt explains that most cabinet ministers don't have an email address. "They don't regularly look at their departmental Web sites, which are woefully inadequate. It make us look like bumbling amateurs."

If you're interested in the World Internet Forum, you can email Derek Wyatt at wyattd@parliament.uk. His own Web site for Sittingbourne and Sheppey is at www.derekwyattmp.co.uk.

PDQ

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Source: Internet Magazine, October 1999. Prices exclude VAT@ 17.5%. Accounts include UK domain registration only.
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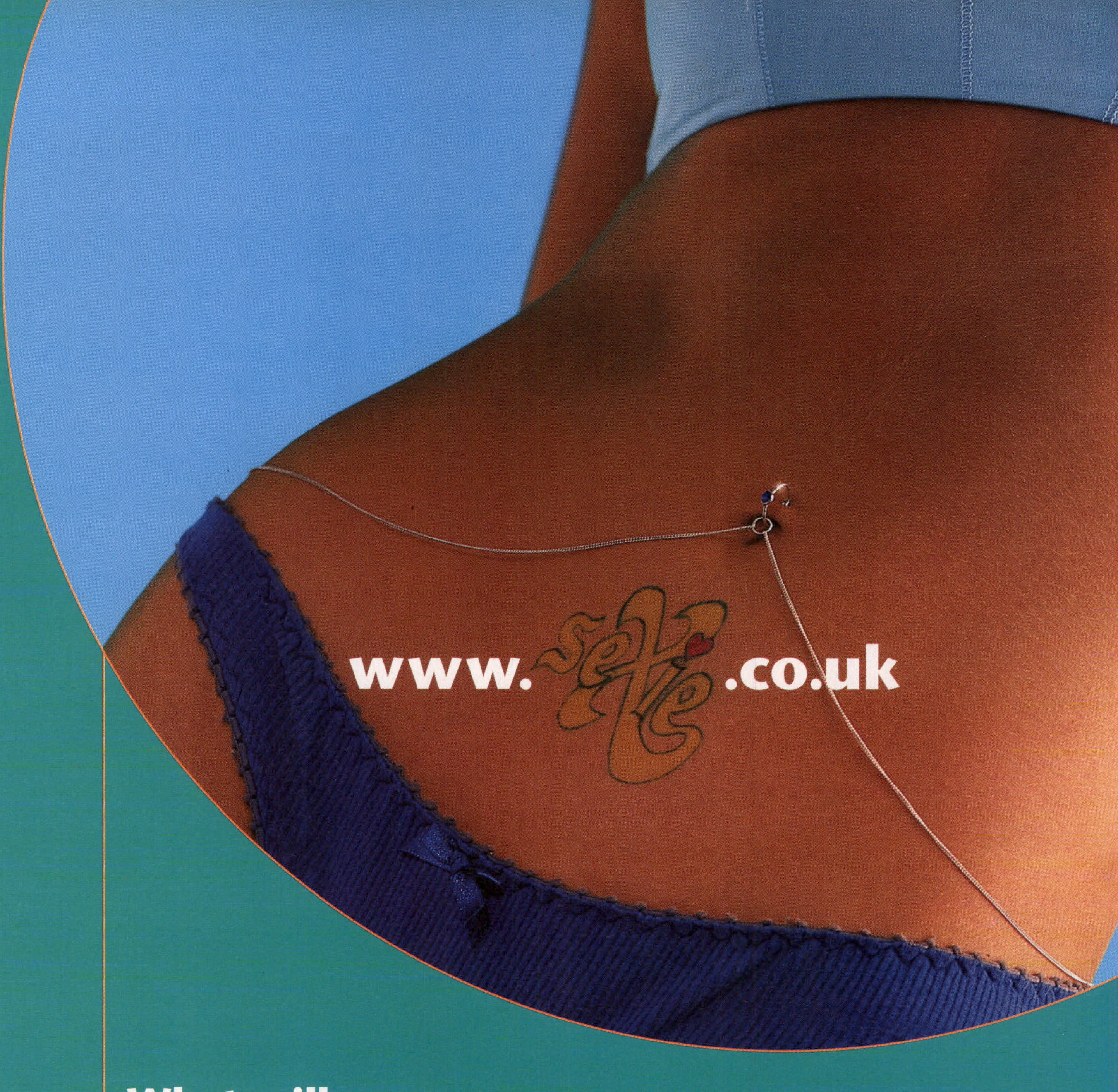

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Paying the piper

The time has come to decide whether we want free ISP access or free phone calls to the Net. **Tanya Kreisky** explains why it's impractical and unreasonable to expect both

It's a rare thing in *Internet Magazine*. An article that's still completely relevant two years later. The speed of change on the Net usually means we find ourselves working hard to keep everything up to date. In February 1998 we launched a campaign for unmetered calls to the Internet with the words "Local phone calls are the most important factor in defining and restricting how we use the Internet in the UK. And we reckon it's about time that changed."

In this month's news, our e-commerce minister, Patricia Hewitt, feels pretty much the same way. She believes present call tariffs are stifling the growth of e-commerce in the UK. But, best of all, she believes that "unmetered calls will be introduced very soon". The Government's often slow to catch on, after all.

To be fair, the months since our campaign have seen the advent of free ISPs, changing the face of access in the UK and putting cheaper calls firmly on the back burner for a while. But, now the excitement's died down, local call charges are back to haunt BT.

BT is making a profit of £105 a second. Even a 1p a minute, you're paying way over the odds for a connection that costs one fifty-thousandth of a penny to make. It's making a tidy profit out of us Net users, and stifling the UK's potential to boot. Without a US-style unmetered call structure, we can't compete.

E-commerce, online software, huge downloads, instant email and online gaming can't take off without them.

So we want unmetered calls. That was always pretty obvious, but along with free calls, we should be looking at what we want from our ISPs. If we want a quality service from ISPs who are constantly developing new and exciting technology, we should be prepared to pay them for it.

There's an inherent problem with any free service – you aren't paying, so they don't owe you anything. Once you're paying, you've got rights to acceptable levels of service. There's been a levelling out among service providers. As we found when we were testing our ISPs of the year, very few services stand out. And those were the 30 top ISPs in the country.

Don't get me wrong – free ISPs have done a wonderful job of bringing the Internet to millions of new users. But these users are finding that the Net still costs plenty. It's easy to forget when you have a whizzy leased line at your disposal all day, but think of the shock when you're online at home and look up to find it's been four hours since you connected.

If you're a light Net user, the free ISP might remain the perfect model for you, but as we've found in this month's free Net access round-up, some of the best and cheapest ways to spend time online are coming from new ISPs reconsidering the free calls angle. SkyTrak800 is offering 60 hours of Net access a month for £7.50. Some 0800 companies suffered severe teething problems, but this could be a glimpse of the future.

Even BT Internet is now offering an 0800 service at the weekends. So it was amusing to find this quote in our April 98 issue from then BT Internet boss, John Swingewood: "If an ISP thinks they will be successful offering free local calls, then let them try." They're trying, but while they're paying BT, it's hard to succeed.

> **"BT will string this one out as long as possible. A lot of those massive profits are thanks to local calls."**

So call charges are big news again – thanks in major part to the work of the Campaign for Unmetered Telecoms (CUT, at **www.unmetered .org.uk**). Its mission is to get unlimited dialup calls to the Net for a single monthly fee. And it wants you to badger your telco, Oftel, MPs and the press until we get it. Big names like *The Times* and the *News Of The World* are already on board.

Oftel has already stated that home Net access is too expensive, and BT keeps inching down the costs of time online just enough to keep it out of hot water.

The Government looks like our best chance for free calls. Its manifesto pledges to bring Net access to all are coming out of the woodwork at last. In November, it announced plans to give 100,000 underprivileged families the opportunity to rent refurbished PCs for Net access. All well and good, but how are families already on a tight budget supposed to pay the resulting phone bills?

It's all still wonderfully vague, and then there was the rather pathetic response from our Chancellor that Oftel was making sure things were competitive and BT was having a bit of a think.

BT will string this one out as long as possible. A lot of those massive profits are thanks to local calls. We'll have to see whether Patricia Hewitt can make a difference , and see how soon her definition of "very soon" is. She's fighting the good fight, and I wish her luck.

In a battle between BT and the Internet, the Internet will win. I just hope the end's in sight.

Tanya Kreisky is assistant editor of *Internet Magazine*. She can be contacted at tanyak@internet.emap.com.

And let us know your opinion on unmetered calls – email us at feedback@internet.emap.com

mailbox

Email us and have your say feedback@internet.emap.com

You'll like this...

As I am a touring magician, I live on the road for quite a bit of the year. Whenever I get home I check out the email. So I decided to get a laptop and pick the email up wherever I was, which is mostly in hotels. Many hotels have a laptop connection provided, usually in the back of the telephone in the room. I used to pay a subscription to MSN and was very happy with the service. One day, however, when I came home and checked my mail, I was told that, in a deal with BT, I no longer had to pay. It turned out to be very nice, not. EVERYTHING took longer. Don't give me the story about more people being online. There were millions online with MSN and we always got through and the thing zipped along much faster than it does now. Why would it be slower? Well, who wants us online longer? BT!

The next problem was that there isn't a hotel in the land where you can check your emails. It doesn't seem to matter whether you are Freeweb, Freeserve, Madasafish, Virgin or whatever, none of the 'free' services will accept a call from a hotel room. The reason is that they have to recognise the phone line number and the hotels won't give you their phone line numbers. Do you know an answer to this? I seem to have a similar problem with my Nokia Communicator. It receives messages from Freeserve but won't accept them for transmission.

Paul Daniels

Andrew Starling replies: Paul, the changeover of MSN from paid to free included a change of backbone (upstream network provider) from UUNet to BTnet. It's also common for free services to be more heavily loaded than paid services. They usually have less modems and less bandwidth per user.

There are two options for checking you free account mail when out and about. The first is to get a Yahoo! or Hotmail email account and use the Check External Mail facility that comes with it. The other is to access ThatWeb.com on the Internet and enter your email address and password there. ThatWeb finds your mail wherever it is, with very few exceptions. Both these methods can be used for sending mail too.

It's easy to get into a bit of a mess with mail held in different formats, but at least these systems allow you to carry on using your normal address while you're away.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

At last, a satisfied customer

Some months ago you spearheaded the Campaign for flat-rate Unmetered Telephone Access for Internet users. This was very commendable. During this campaign, you interviewed one of BT's top bosses who categorically said it is impossible to provide such a service. Sadly, the campaign disappeared in to the thin air never to be heard of again.

Shortly after that, LocalTel with Tempo launched a free Net access service between 6pm and 8am on weekdays all days on weekends via screaming.net. The only catch is that one has to switch the line to LocalTel, which I think it is not that unreasonable. What surprises me was that nobody ever praised them for breaking the BT taboo that Internet access (both ISP and telephone) can never be free. All I keep hearing and reading are complaints about their services. The way some of the computer magazines pounded on LocalTel is disgraceful. I do wonder sometimes if some of them are not on BT pay roll. It is true that they had some problems at the initial stage but they have improved tremendously. I think they deserved a pat on the back for proving that free telephone and Internet access are possible. For the sake of free telephone and Internet access, please let us give them a bit of praise. As far as I am concerned, they deserved it.

James Taiwo
James@taiwo.screaming.net

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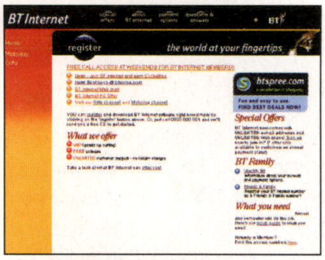
BT blues...

I just want to inform you about the crap service BT Internet provides at the weekend on its 0800 number. The amount of people complaining seems to have no effect on BTI, they hardly ever reply and when they do they say the same rubbish like "our engineers are looking into it". I thought you could investigate further!

Maybe BT will do something about the service if magazines start to test the service at the weekends and give them bad reviews! Thanks for your time

Damian Howard
Damian.Howard@btinternet.com



BT Internet – the world at your fingertips, but very slowly

Could you please investigate the terrible standard of service at BT Internet. I've been a subscriber to their service for some time now and the quality has gone from not bad to downright atrocious.

Their connection speeds are dropping, their download speeds are totally useless. Before you ask, yes I'm using the latest drivers etc.

Also their 0800 service is a farce, their download speeds are so poor that people disconnect from the 0800 dial-up to connect to standard 0845 dial-up lo-call number or another ISP.

I've had enough of their lies, I've cancelled my account and I'm now solely with Virgin Net.

Ray Butler
Email address withheld

I recently decided to move from my old ISP back to BT Internet to take advantage of their 'free weekend' offer, mainly on the assumption that I would be able to control what was being spent on the Internet. The logic being if I only went on the Net at weekends, the only bill would be the £11.75 a month that BT charges. To say I am totally disillusioned with the whole thing is an understatement.

The service is so slow it nearly stops, especially when you're trying to download anything. The most annoying thing was when I called the support to see if there were any problems, the response was "because it's free, there are a lot of people on it", that also means that a lot of people are also paying for it as well. Effectively, they are offering something that they obviously cannot cope with. I am now considering going back to my old ISP and putting the £11.75 away each month towards the phone bill, at least 2Mb downloads don't get cut off in hours (told you it was slow).

Paul Smith
paul.k.smith1@btinternet.com

Andrew Starling replies: We talked to BT Internet about this issue and the company told us: "We're aware that there have been some difficulties with 0800 access at weekends. We've been continually adding capacity to bring the service up to the level that customers would normally expect, and we believe that we've got the problem sorted out now." Here at *Internet Magazine* we've heard nothing but bad reports about all the 0800 services. If you've found one that works well (see our star letter), let us know. They deserve the publicity.

I think you'll find...

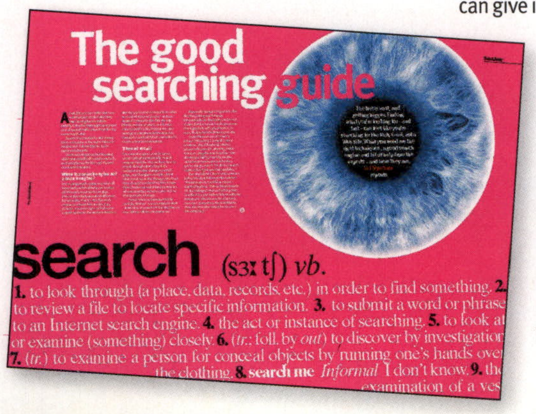
Thanks to *Internet Magazine* for the article on searching the Web. However, I'd like to point out a couple of inaccuracies.

1. Google isn't a metasearch engine. This is an insult to the sophistication of their search technology, which is arguably the most advanced Web search engine. It is unique in the way it incorporates page popularity into its relevance ranking and so it's no accident it scores well on the relevance test.

2. Excite doesn't have the largest database of indexed sites. Neither does the NEC Research Institute say it does – the article published in *Nature* magazine cites Northern Light as the largest search engine, with Excite in 9th place.

The article was very welcome and included some good tips on choosing search engines. But Google and Northern Light would be within their rights to be cross about not being given their dues.

Dr Pita Enriquez Harris
pita@oxford-knowledge.com



The good searching guide

search (s3ːtʃ) *vb.*
1. to look through (a place, data, records, etc.) in order to find something. **2.** to review a file to locate specific information. **3.** to submit a word or phrase to an Internet search engine. **4.** the act or instance of searching. **5.** to look at or examine (something) closely. **6.** (*tr.*; foll. by *out*) to discover by investigation **7.** (*tr.*) to examine a person for conceal objects by running one's hands ove the clothing. **8.** **search me** *Informal* I don't know. **9.** th examination of a ves

Rude names

How about using a 'sex' suffix to police porn on the net?

Having recently surfed the net looking for specific portal sites, I was disgusted to note exactly how many porn sites there are – many masquerading under innocuous .com and .net domain names. Couldn't a suffix of .sex be created for such sites? The pedants among us might argue that sex and porn are two different issues, but, it may be one way of creating a "red light" district in cyberspace.

Porn site owners would be obliged to register under the proper .sex address making policing of the Internet much easier. I have experimented with parental control, but it's not foolproof and you can still stumble on such sites accidentally like I did.

Lopa Patel
Lopa.patel@dms-direct.co.uk

Oh .com on!

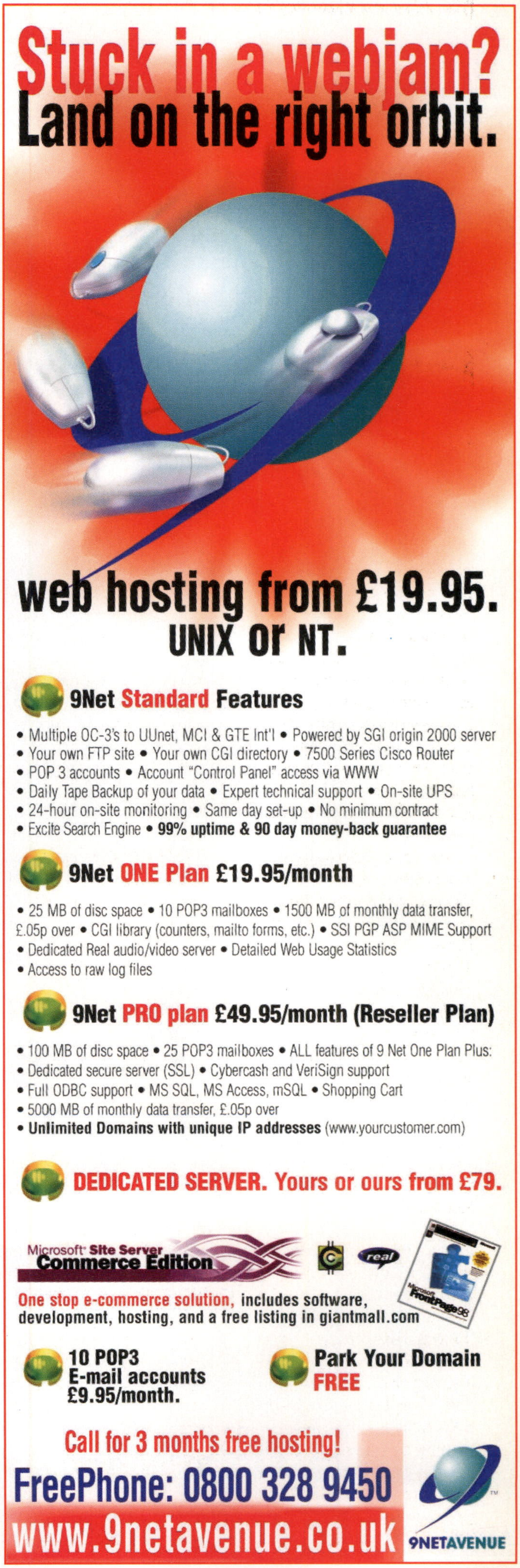
Has any one had problems getting .com domains transferred? I bought some .co.uk names from freeparking.co.uk and had no problems. Then I bought a .com and have had an immense amount of trouble getting it transferred to another ISP. I found that the domain had been registered through a CORE Register in Switzerland.

Trying to get anybody who knows how this system works let alone reply to emails is impossible. I have clients going mad at me. There should be some sort of warning about buying .com domains when using CORE as very few UK ISPs seem to know how it works let alone can do it.

Can anything be done?

Dave Clarke
clarked@compuserve.com

Tanya Kreisky replies: We regularly get complaints about moving domain names. The best advice we can give is not to opt for the cheapest registration service. They're operating on the slimmest of margins, so if you ask them to do anything out of the ordinary, it's not worth their while. It's usually worth spending a bit more, especially if you think you're likely to switch ISPs.



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Suits you!

Your complete guide to Free Net Access

The growth of subscription-free ISPs was the success story of last year. There's now a bewildering number of free ISPs to choose from, and an array of optional extras on offer. There's a free service out there to suit you, however you use the Net. Steve Patient helps you choose an ISP that's the perfect fit

In September 1998, Dixons launched Freeserve, the first fully-featured subscription-free ISP. It revolutionised the Internet in the UK. You no longer had to pay £10 a month for email addresses, Web space and Net access. You only had to pay the cost of your telephone calls. Subscribers signed up to Freeserve in their droves. It soon had over a million subscribers, nearly double its nearest rival.

Seeing the success of Freeserve, other ISPs decided they wanted a slice of the cake. The ISP business has since become so cut-throat that it's no longer enough to be free. There are now more than 250 subscription-free ISPs, and new services launch every week. This means new entrants to the market have to offer something extra, which has led to some innovative business models.

One of the first ideas was to lower the cost of calls to the Net. ISPs can do this by ditching BT and using a different telco that offers cheaper tariffs. If you want to use this service, you also have to change your telco from BT (which can be a major headache), along with your telephone number. With some services, you have to use a special prefix every time you dial.

Telcos that have local POPs (point of presence) at an exchange near you can offer low-cost Net access and don't make you change your telco. Cable and Wireless's free ISP, Internet Lite, is available to many people on this basis. Another way to offer lower costs is to provide access via an 0800 freephone

Pic: Paul Postle

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number. Screaming.net adopted this approach early on, but it meant you had to change your telco from BT to Localtel. Subscribers had so many problems that Screaming.net found itself featured on the BBC's Watchdog programme.

0800 numbers are expensive for ISPs to buy, but they're affordable in bulk. An interesting new access model is the paid-for 0800 ISP. You pay a fixed monthly charge, but all your calls to the Net are free. Advantages include being a real customer – you pay a fee, so you can demand fixed Net access costs and make massive savings over metered calls. This is how the Net works in the US.

Some free ISPs try to tempt you by giving money to charity. You pay normal phone costs, but some of the charge goes to a charity or an other good cause. Others go for greed and offer you future benefits. An example of this type of free ISP is Mutual.net, which offers you redeemable shares if and when it floats on the stock exchange.

Who you gonna call?

A new trend is for companies to offer discounts on unrelated services in exchange for using their free ISP services. This is an example of cross-selling – you need to be using both the ISP and the other service to get the full benefits.

The biggest gamble – and the cheapest Net access – comes courtesy of the 0800, subscription-free ISPs such as Freedomi and CallNet 0800. This is a high-risk gamble as it isn't yet clear how the ISPs will make the money they need to provide a good service. They claim they'll be able to generate revenue from e-commerce and advertising.

You might not care how an ISP meets its costs, but the quality of its service depends on how well it can finance its business. The loudest complaints in newsgroups come from the people paying the least for Net access.

Quality of service is extremely important. If an ISP can't afford good Net connections, it'll deliver data slowly to your PC. If it can't afford enough phone lines, you'll find it difficult to get connected. If it can't afford competent staff, its reliability and technical support will suffer. If it can't afford a full range of services, you won't be able to use all the Net's features.

It's in your own interests to use a fast, reliable, well organised, full service ISP in order to get the most out of the Net. Free is fine, but a sub-standard service and higher phone costs (because everything takes longer) are the hidden costs.

So how long will these subscription-free ISPs last? As we went to press, BT had just announced that it'll charge ISPs a flat fee of £140 per month per port. Each of these ports serves 15-20 subscribers, so BT argues that companies could now afford to offer unlimited access at a flat rate of around £20 a month. But BT's deal could well drive many of the existing free ISPs out of business.

The first problem is that BT's offer only applies to the largest of the UK's ISPs. Companies will have to buy a minimum of 10,000 ports each month to qualify, so only ISPs with over 150,000 users will benefit from the deal. Second, ISPs such as Freeserve have been able to fund their subscription-free services by taking a cut of the interconnect charges that are divided between BT and their own telecoms service provider, such as Energis in Freeserve's case. But the

The traditional free ISP

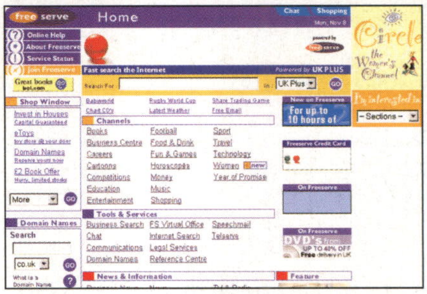
Freeserve

www.freeserve.co.uk

Freeserve was the first ISP to offer subscription-free Net access and it's a great example of a traditional subscription-free ISP – one that offers free email, Web space and access to the Net. But subscribers still have to pay for call charges.

With over 1.5 million users, it's the largest ISP in the UK. Now in its second year, Freeserve has sorted out several problems and is offering a good quality service.

Energis provides Freeserve's connectivity and its ISP, Planet Online, the infrastructure. Dixons, Currys, PC World and Link are outlets for its signup disks. This combination has proved hard to beat, and Freeserve had the advantage of being the first mass market free ISP in the UK.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Freeserve was the first subscription-free ISP in the UK. It boasts more subscribers than anyone else and offers a complete service

Sign up

You can sign up using an installation CD or online from the Freeserve site. If you register online, you get a choice of setups. You can either download an .INS file, which will set up Windows 95/98 and Outlook Express automatically, or use the information to configure your system manually.

The latter option is useful if you don't want to disturb your existing settings.

Support

The online support helps you set up various different Internet software packages to use with Freeserve, but doesn't even mention Netscape Navigator. Mac and PC users are supported online and via the 50p a minute technical support line. There's also automated email support.

Features

Freeserve offers all the services of a subscription-based ISP, but not to the same standard. For instance, you only get one email account (with unlimited aliases). You get a news server, 15Mb of Web space and 128kbps connections if you have ISDN.

Freeserve has always positioned itself as a portal as well as an ISP. The site offers a variety of goods and services, but are just links to other sites.

Competitors

BT Click (www.btclick.com), Virgin Net (www.virgin.net) and Bun.com (www.bun.com) are three of Freeserve's most popular rivals.

Suits you?

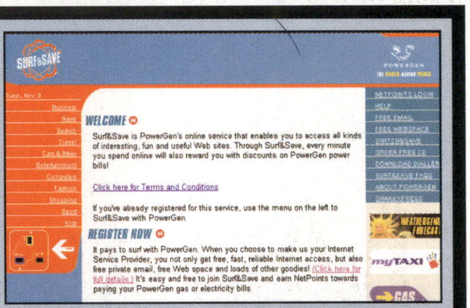
Around 1.5 million people have registered with Freeserve. Tony Blair has even given it access to the Labour Party database of 390,000 members.

They pay you

Surf & Save

www.surfandsave.co.uk

The idea is simple. For every 10 minutes you spend online with Surf & Save, you get a 1p credit towards your PowerGen energy bills. When the credits reach £5, this sum is automatically deducted from your gas or electricity bill. You don't have to be a PowerGen customer to use the service, but you won't get the savings if you aren't.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It pays to surf with PowerGen. When you choose to make us your Internet Service Provider, you not only get free, fast, reliable Internet access, but also free private email, free Web space and loads of other goodies! (Click here for full details.) It's easy and free to join Surf&Save and earn NetPoints towards paying your PowerGen gas or electricity bills.

PowerGen's Surf & Save free ISP hopes to persuade you to accept an incomplete service in exchange for a small reduction in your bills

Signup

Signup online by downloading the 1.7Mb Surf & Save dialer. Alternatively, call (0800) 169 6911 for a free installation CD. Instructions for Macs are also available on the site.

Support

The Surf & Save site has accurate, if well hidden, support pages for specific applications. But it's remarkably uninformative about the technical aspects of the service.

The help support line normally costs 50p a minute, but was on a national rate number during our tests. The help desk didn't know much about anything, so we phoned the PowerGen head office instead. It referred us to the bloke who set up the service. Amazing.

Features

Despite the example set by many other ISPs, Surf & Save doesn't excel in many areas. You get five email accounts and free Web space, but there's no news server and poor, expensive technical support. The site's an unimpressive, uninspiring mini portal. The main feature is the savings on your gas or electricity bill, but you have to use the service a lot to earn very little.

Competitors

The Save & Surf approach is new to the free ISP market. It's surprising that more of the high street names haven't offered similar schemes. .

Suits you?

Sounds good on paper, but the savings offered by these loyalty schemes are usually not enough to keep users loyal.

proposal from BT is likely to mean that any ISPs signing up to the deal will have to use BT as their telecoms service provider.

Across these pages you'll find examples of ISPs using all of the models mentioned so far, discussing the pros and cons and giving you the information you need to choose the right ISP for you.

How do they perform?

Judging the performance of a free ISP involves measuring a lot of factors. Most people will judge them on how easily they can connect, the speed of the connection and the download speed of Web pages and files.

Services based on BT Click tend to have reliable connections and reasonably high speeds, as do Telinco-based ISPs. Freeserve, which uses Energis for connectivity, performs surprisingly well considering its large user base.

The poor performers are the free-call ISPs or those offering restricted (such as off-peak) 0800 access. At present, the more these services offer, the worse they perform. This manifests itself in endless redials without a connection and poor performance once you're online.

ISPs that require you to change your telco cause the most problems. This seems to be thanks to a combination of poor administration of the telco changeover and inadequate resources.

The subscription-based 0800 ISPs seem to be able to maintain service levels better than their free cousins. Longer term, these services look like offering the best price to performance ratio.

A good place to ask about other people's experience of ISPs – and share your own opinions – is the newsgroup alt.internet.providers.free.uk.

The verdict

If you've been using the Internet for any length of time, you'll know that efficiency and reliability is often more important than cost – time can't be replaced, but money can. Nevertheless, lower costs, or at least the illusion of lower costs, attracts a lot of people who use the Net.

In practice, free ISPs (where you only pay the call costs) all cost about the same to use and deliver similar levels of service. StrayDuck's 'third week free' model is simple and saves you money. We like it a lot.

»

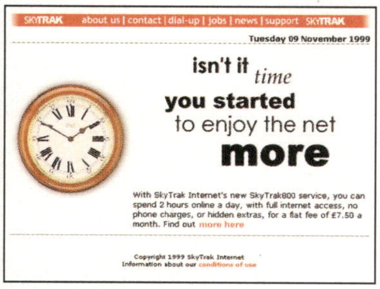
Free call, paid subscription

SkyTrak800

www.0800skytrak.com

The problem with 'free' ISPs is that you don't know how much they're costing you in calls. SkyTrak800 charges you a monthly subscription of £7.50 and gives you an 0800 access number, which means you don't pay for the calls you make to the Net.

Your £7.50 buys you 60 hours a month, which you can use whenever you like. That's at least two hours a day which, even using the weekend 1p per minute tariff, would cost you about £30 a month with a free ISP. At peak rates, the same amount of time online would cost you over £100. So sometimes it can work out cheaper to pay a subscription.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Tuesday 09 November 1999

isn't it *time* you started to enjoy the net more

With SkyTrak Internet's new SkyTrak800 service, you can spend 2 hours online a day, with full internet access, no phone charges, or hidden extras, for a flat fee of £7.50 a month. Find out more here

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Skytrack offers you 60 hours of Net access for £7.50 a month – a quarter of the cost of 60 hours weekend rate access from a free ISP

Signup

The only way to sign up at the moment is to print out the registration form on the SkyTrak800 Web site and send it in with a cheque or postal order, though we're promised more sophistication soon. In practice, it works well enough.

Support

All telephone support is 60p a minute, but it's only available between 9am and 5pm. There's no online support, apart from a page telling you how much time you have left for the current month, but it's promised soon.

Features

You get five email accounts, a news feed, free Web space and that's it. SkyTrak800's business is providing Net access, not content.

Competitors

The main competition at the moment is 08004U (**www.08004u.co.uk**), which offers a two-tier service. For £24.99 you get unlimited off-peak access (evenings and weekends) via an 0800 number, while £49.99 buys you unlimited 24/7 free Net access.

Suits you?

08004U has suffered severe problems, but SkyTrak's model could be the future. It's great if you use the Net a lot.

ISPs offering shares

Blue Carrots

www.bluecarrot.co.uk

Jumping aboard a bandwagon started in the US, Blue Carrots offers you 1,000 virtual shares if you sign up and visit the site regularly. The idea is to eventually float the company. You're promised 80 per cent of the company's real shares. No one knows when, or if, this will happen, or what the shares will be worth. Meanwhile, Blue Carrots is just another free ISP.

Signup

You can sign up online and receive a Windows installation CD or phone an automated CD ordering system on (0906) 554 5708. This'll cost you £1.50.

To qualify for shares, you have to use Blue Carrots for at least 100 minutes in 11 months of the year. You have to provide a lot of personal info.

Support

The online support is comprehensive. The helpline costs 50p a minute and there's free email support.

Features

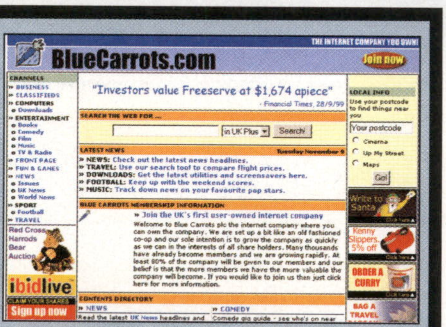
The Blue Carrots site is yet another attempt at a portal. It has a huge number of links, e-commerce opportunities (with discounts for members) and Web space, though administering it is rather odd. There's no news server.

Competitors

My ISP (**www.my-isp.co.uk**) and The Mutual (**www.themutual.net**) offer you free shares on a first come, first served basis. The first 20,000 subscribers to My ISP get 10,000 free units and the next 50,000 get 1,000 units. But the ISP's giving away free units, not free shares. Totalise (**www.totalise.net**) gives up to 3,500 real shares for just using the service. It also offers free technical support, a rarity in the free ISP market.

Suits you?

These ISPs are targeted at the kind of people who join building societies hoping they'll convert to a bank, and earn them a loyalty bonus in the process. You could make a lot of money if (and it's a big if!) the companies float.



"Investors value Freeserve at $1,674 apiece"
- Financial Times, 28/9/99

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LATEST NEWS Tuesday November 9

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» DOWNLOADS: Get the latest utilities and screensavers here.
» FOOTBALL: Keep up with the weekend scores.
» MUSIC: Track down news on your favourite pop stars.

BLUE CARROTS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

» Join the UK's first user-owned internet company

Welcome to Blue Carrots plc the internet company where you can own the company. We are set up a bit like an old fashioned co-op and our sole intention is to grow the company as quickly as we can in the interests of all share holders. Many thousands have already become members and we are growing rapidly. At least 80% of the company will be given to our members and our belief is that the more members we have the more valuable the company will become. If you would like to join us then just click here for more information.

CONTENTS DIRECTORY

» NEWS
Read the latest UK News headlines and

» COMEDY
Comedy gig guide - see who's on near

Join Blue Carrots and you get 1,000 shares, which might have value one day, if Blue Carrot successfully goes public. It looks unlikely at the moment

Unmetered Access

Net users, some ISPs and companies hoping to take advantage of the Net for e-commerce, are all campaigning hard for unmetered access. This is the US model where phone subscribers pay a flat monthly fee for all their local calls.

It's the only model that'll let Net users stop worrying about the phone bill and concentrate on making more use of the Net in their everyday life. So far, BT's fought off every suggestion of unmetered access, but it looks as though it's on its way regardless. In effect, subscription-based 0800 ISPs are already offering unmetered access.

For lots of good stuff on the whole subject of unmetered access, including arguments for and against, campaign information and how you can help make the change happen sooner, visit the CUT site – the Campaign for Unmetered Telephony – at **www.unmetered.org.uk**.

To provide your customers with free internet access

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Building your business connections **www.netkonect.net**

Free subscription, free calls

Callnet0800

www.callnet0800.com

Callnet, owned by Canadian company NAG, doesn't charge you anything – no call costs, setup, or subscription. You have to agree to use Callnet's service for cut-price national and international calls, but you don't have to make any calls. Apparently, Callnet0800 plans to make money from your other calls, as well as from ads and e-commerce. As this seems unlikely to pay for any expansion, the service is likely to become inaccessible as more users sign up.

Signup

You can sign up by phone or online, though you'll need to provide more information than your mother knows about you, and giving a credit card number for national and international call billing. You then wait to be issued with a PIN number, after which you can enjoy busy tones on the 0800 number.

Support

The site is light on Callnet0800 information and technical specs, but there's email support address and a premium rate helpline. Getting a response can take a while. You're automatically kicked off after an hour, but can reconnect by redialling.

Features

Five email accounts, a news server, 20Mb of Web space and totally free access – what more do you want? On the downside, the news server is reported to be deficient in updating new postings and there have been problems with the mail server. But you have to log on to discover these things. The site's content is the standard poor man's portal offerings, plus opportunities to spend money on goods and services. Interestingly, it includes connectivity support for the Sega Dreamcast games console. Check a real user's guide at **www.dothot.co.uk/callnet**.

Competitors

F1 Racing magazine and 4UNet (**www.4UNet.co.uk**) are the same company with different numbers. Freedomi (**www.freedomi.co.uk**) is also worth a look, though it hadn't launched when we went to press.

Help keep the internet FREE!
scentpacking.com
callnet

Callnet offers completely free, unlimited 0800 Net access, but it's unable to cope with demand. Free is no use if it doesn't work

Suits you?

It's difficult to see how the free call access model can work.

But SkyTrack's subscription-based 0800 service delivers the same for even less. This was our favourite ISP service tested. We also liked the fact that it can be accessed from any computer or operating system capable of connecting to the Net.

The completely free 0800 services, and those requiring you to change your telco, aren't as appealing, but you might be attracted to them for other reasons. If you don't use the Net much, offer the lowest costs on all your calls.

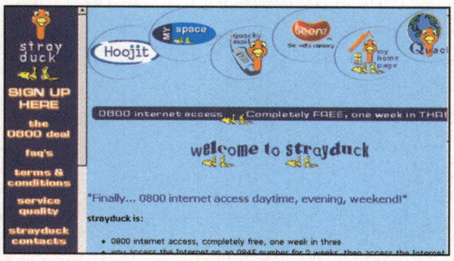
Unmetered access looks promising, but only if the service delivers. We think the model subscription-based, free call enjoyed by people in the US is the way to go.

Reduced cost

StrayDuck

www.strayduck.com

StrayDuck is owned by phone company Telinco, which offers a complete ISP package used by around 40 free ISPs. What distinguishes StrayDuck, apart from its name, is its hybrid quality.



0800 internet access Completely FREE, one week in THR

welcome to strayduck

"Finally... 0800 internet access daytime, evening, weekend!"

strayduck is:

- 0800 internet access, completely free, one week in three

StrayDuck's unique selling proposition is one free week in three – a third off your phone bill. It's a reasonable deal, but tricky to manage efficiently

You use it the same way as any free ISP, using an 0845 number for two weeks. StrayDuck adds up the amount of minutes you've spent online and halves it for an average weekly number of minutes. You then get to access your account with an 0800 number during the third week for the number of minutes calculated. After this, the cycle starts again. In effect, it reduces your phone costs by a third.

Free minutes are fairly common with ISPs, but StrayDuck's model is easier to understand and more generous than most. It also encourages you to stay online for longer.

Signup

You can sign up on the site or send off for an installation CD. The online method is elegant. You download a small dialer that takes you to the signup page. Once you're signed up, your dialer's upgraded to use the main access number. At this point you can download a .INS file to set up Internet Explorer for StrayDuck or add the settings manually.

Everything works through the dialer. It records your time online and switches to the 0800 number in the third week.

Support

There appear to be two technical support numbers, one that charges you a national rate and another that charges a premium rate, which is odd. There's a fair amount of support on the site, but you shouldn't need it much.

Features

You get five email accounts, email aliases, a news server, 10Mb of Web space and Net access. StrayDuck's site isn't particularly interesting. It wants your call minutes, not your eyeballs.

Competitors

There are many subscription-free ISPs offering free time online. It's worth doing the maths, though, as – unlike StrayDuck's offer – not all free minute deals are worth having. X-Stream (**www.x-stream.com**), Great Escape (**www.greatxscape.com**) and ic24 (**www.ic24.net**) are all worth a look.

Suits you?

With the exception of Strayduck, it's worth calculating how much you spend online because not all free minute deals are worth having.

Charity support

Yahoo! and Oxfam

www.oxfam.org.uk

Behind Yahoo! is the BT Click free ISP. Yahoo! resells its service as a joint brand with various organisations, such as Waterstones and Tesco, to maximise user numbers. Its partnership with Oxfam is aimed at people who want to support charities. A small proportion – no figures appear to be available – of your dial-up phone costs go to Oxfam. You can calm your conscience and still get excellent connectivity at local call rates.

Signup

Download the dialer software from Oxfam's site or pick up a CD from any Oxfam shop. You can also have it sent to you by phoning (0870) 241 0874. Signup is trivial because it's really BT Click, which uses CLID to identify the call origin rather than passwords and IDS. If you're a Mac user, you'll need the CD for installation.

Support

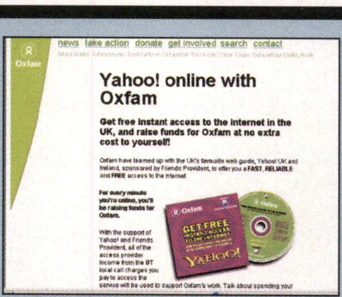
The usual 50p a minute telephone helpline is available, but there's not much going wrong with this ISP.

Features

The underlying BT Click service offers local call access and nothing else. Yahoo! and Oxfam recommend Web-based email using Yahoo! Mail, with GeoCities for free Web space. There's no news feed. It begins to look as if your conscience is costing you after all.

Competitors

Sign up to Waitrose's ISP (**www.waitrose.com**) and you can donate money to the Red Cross and the British Heart Foundation, among other good causes. The service is backed by GX Networks. Care4Free (**www.care4free.net**) and the trade union Unison (**www.unisonfree.net**) both offer relatively similar services.



Yahoo! online with Oxfam

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Oxfam have teamed up with the UK's favourite web guide, Yahoo! UK and Ireland, sponsored by Friends Provident, to offer you a **FAST**, **RELIABLE** and **FREE** access to the internet

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With the support of Yahoo! and Friends Provident, all of the access provider income from the BT local call charges you pay to access the service will be used to support Oxfam's work. Talk about spending your

Oxfam's BT Click-powered, Yahoo!-branded service claims to benefit from (part of) every penny you spend connected to the Net, but it doesn't say how much

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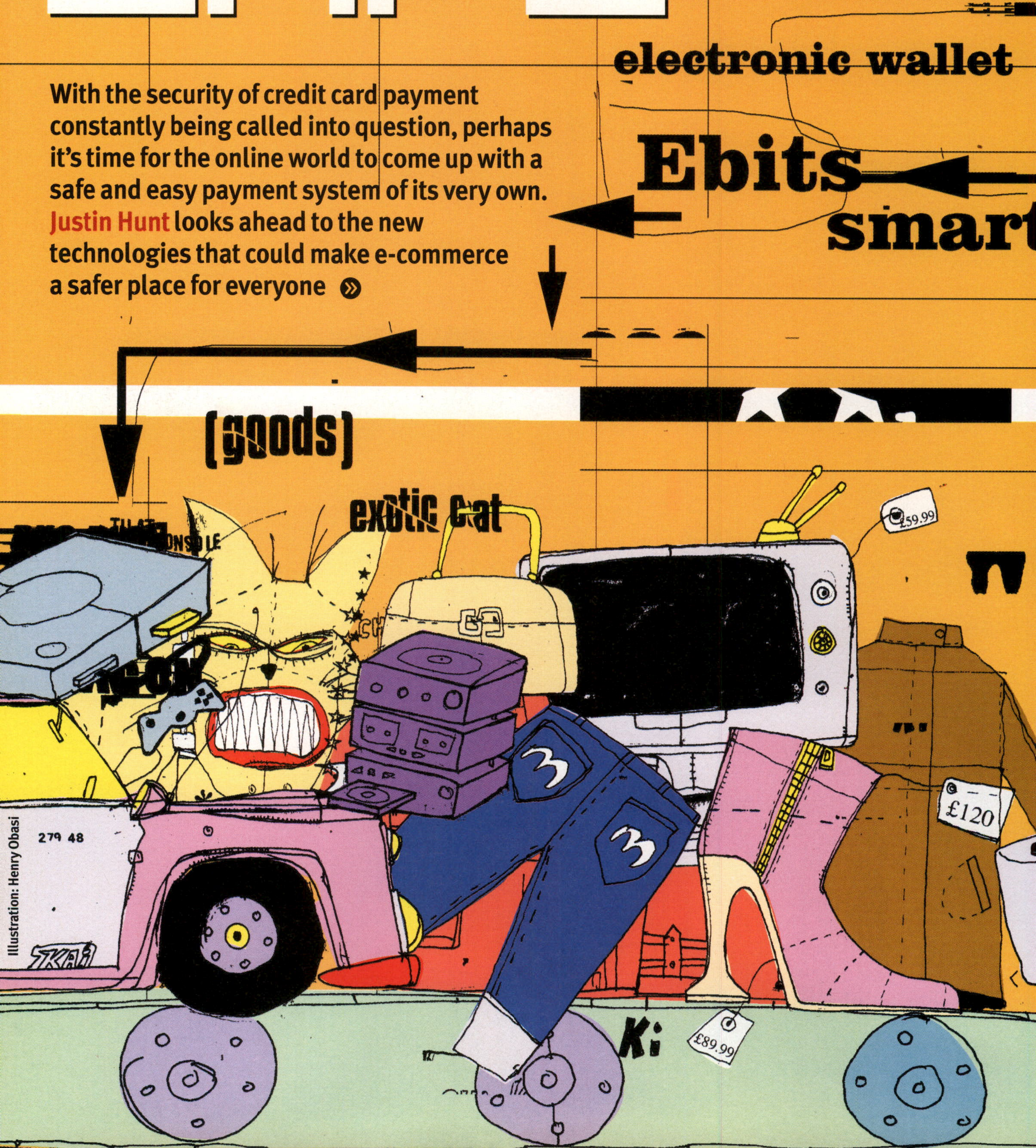
PAYING SAFE

With the security of credit card payment constantly being called into question, perhaps it's time for the online world to come up with a safe and easy payment system of its very own. Justin Hunt looks ahead to the new technologies that could make e-commerce a safer place for everyone »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When you're paying for a meal in a restaurant, or booking cinema tickets over the phone, you probably don't think twice about giving over your credit card details, and the restaurant or cinema doesn't worry about taking them. But things seem different on the Net. There are a lot of successful online shops, but people still get jittery when they're asked to give their credit card details to a Web site. And on the other side of the counter, there's more and more online stores are complaining of customer credit card fraud.

Despite the traditional fear factor (remember how scared people were of cashpoints when they first arrived?), there are still a some practical matters to do with using credit cards on the Net that'll have to be dealt with before too long if the online economy is to flourish.

For instance, the success of online auctions is largely because it encourages people to trade with one another, but you can't pay a friend over the Net with a credit card unless they're not recognised as a merchant, which is, frankly, unlikely.

Credit cards are also impractical for small payments. Go into a shop and try to buy a Mars bar with your credit card, and see what reaction you get. The same is true on the Net. Shops can't afford the cost of credit card transactions for small payments.

Credit cards – what's the score?

So what's the future for online payments? Will the credit card companies introduce new Web-based payment services to meet everyone's needs? Will other forms of online payment take off? Could the Microsoft Pound, the Yahoo! Dollar or the AOL Euro be the next big online currency? Are people falsely worried about using credit cards online?

A survey carried out in August 1999 by Which? Online (the Internet arm of the Consumers Association) found that 69 per cent of UK Internet users were worried about fraud. Forty two per cent felt it wasn't safe to use credit cards online while 40 per cent said it was safe to use them.

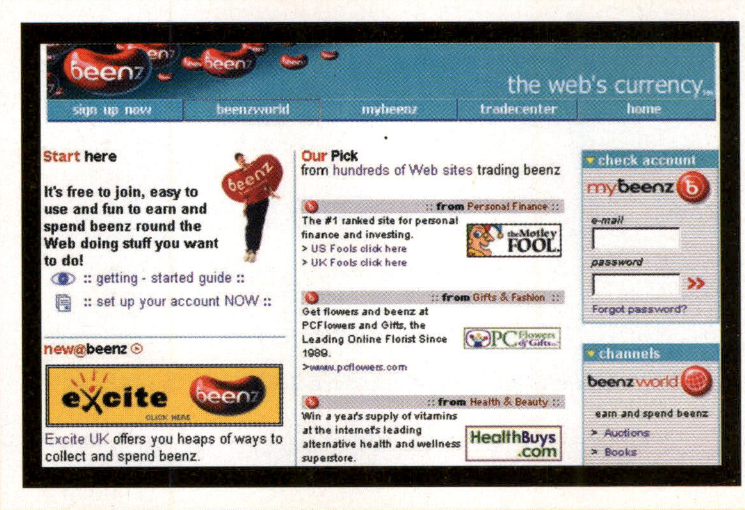
Which? Online's editor, Alan Stevens, argues that credit cards are safe to use when for Internet shopping. "It's not a significant problem in security terms if you're connected to a secure server. And you're not liable if your card is used without your consent. The credit card supplier and/or the business that receives the payment will have to make up the loss. So you're not at risk if someone knows what your credit card number is."

So should people be worried about having their card details stolen? "Hacking occurs, but the incidence of intercepting a card number when it's in transit is minuscule. Hackers aren't interested in online fraud. They're more interested in hacking into Web sites and causing embarrassment by making changes to text and photos."

Stevens argues that the majority of credit card fraud on the Internet originates from offline practices. For instance, someone could acquire another person's credit card details from a slip left lying around in a restaurant and use those numbers to try to buy goods online. Essentially, Stevens is saying credit card fraud is no more likely on the Internet than it is anywhere else.

But what about unscrupulous shops on the Net? What can the industry do to protect itself and consumers against them? According to people working in e-commerce, a lot of payment fraud stems from outside the UK. Shopping portal Zoom has ceased trading with Russia, Greece and Romania because of the payment problems it's encountered there. Others say word gets around on the Net so fast that unscrupulous merchants can never get away with dodgy practices for long. Others argue that you're probably safer on the Net than you are in the real world.

Many of the credit card transaction services on the Net have built-in safeguards to cut down on the possibility of merchant fraud. NetBanx (www.netbanx.com), for instance, handles online credit card transactions and authorises payments with the relevant banks for about 2,000 businesses in the UK, including the BBC, BSkyB, and Capital Radio.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Beenz is a clever marketing wheeze. Visit certain sites on the Net, and you can collect enough Beenz to buy products on the Net

MD Bill Thomson argues that it's unreasonable to claim that any financial transaction is ever totally secure through any medium. NetBanx has been approved by all the leading UK banks, and none of its online credit card transactions – to Thomson's knowledge – have ever been illegally intercepted.

"We're a prime target for hacking," admits Thomson. "But we have a number of strong controls within the business. We don't hold onto card details for long. If we're hacked, the amount of information hackers could get access to would be limited."

NetBanx does get problems with people who've entered the wrong credit card details or made a number up. But Thomson argues that these problems are normal incidents in any situation where you can't see the credit card holder, such as when you take a payment over the phone.

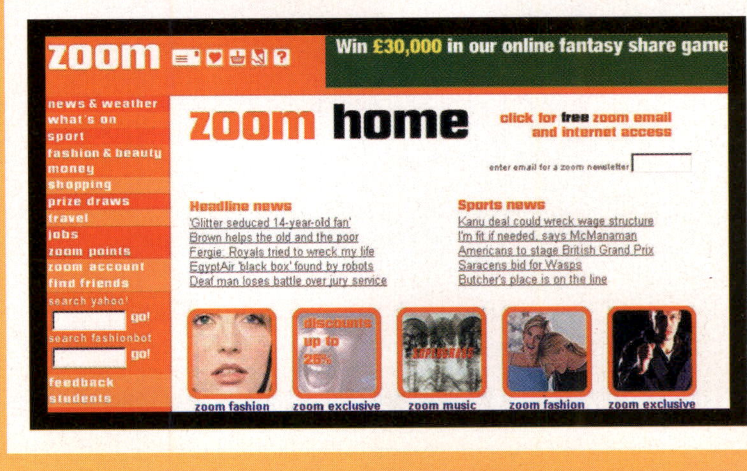
Credit card fraud on the Net accounts for less than one tenth of one per cent of Visa transactions

Visa says breaches of security on the Net are nothing to write home about. The organisation's internal research shows credit card fraud on the Internet accounts for less than one tenth of one per cent of all their transactions. "It's absolutely minuscule," said a spokeswoman for Visa.

Loyalty schemes

To help strengthen consumer confidence and to encourage them to spend more, loyalty schemes, such as Flooz (www.flooz.com) and ipoints (www.ipoints.co.uk), are being introduced. With these you can earn points for purchasing certain goods, which are then redeemable on other online products. They're similar to the reward schemes run by the supermarkets. »

As well as being a shopping portal, Zoom offers loyalty points to customers which can be exchanged for discounted goods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Companies like Oakington want to make e-cash the first choice for shopping online

Companies are increasing incentives as the competition hots up for your online custom. BT Internet subscribers can now collect ClickMiles, which can be exchanged for air miles or for discounts at other online retailers, such as Lastminute.com and CDNow. Zoom's virtual loyalty card offers discounts and virtual card evenings, where you can watch Web cam fashion shows.

Zoom's loyalty card is backed by investment house G E Capital. Zoom's MD, Eva Pascoe, believes it gives the company greater control in case something goes wrong. "It's easier for us to maintain security because it's just between us and GE Capital. It's far more transparent."

The Beenz loyalty scheme is being heavily advertised at the moment. The global marketing officer of Beenz, Nicolas de Santis, claims the service is spreading quickly online. There are an estimated 100,000 account holders in the UK and 100,000 more in the US.

You can earn Beenz for visiting certain sites and filling out questionnaires, and then you can exchange the Beenz for products. There are plans to open offices for the scheme in the Far East and the company's currently setting up in Japan. Essentially, Beenz is a successful marketing wheeze, but it's not intended as be a substitute for online payments.

Any successful e-cash system is likely to become a major headache for governments

Electronic cash

In the future, electronic cash could eventually become the main way you pay for your CDs and groceries over the Net. In an e-cash system, the bank would send you a string of serial numbers representing coins that it would digitally sign.

You'd then store your electronic cash in an electronic wallet or purse on your PC. If you wanted to buy a book, you'd order the book and send the encoded e-cash to the online bookseller. The bookshop would forward the e-cash to your bank, which would check that you hadn't already spent it somewhere else. The bank would then send an acceptance message to the bookseller who sends you the book.

If electronic cash systems become big enough in their own right, they might eventually become independent of the traditional banks and credit card systems. Your salary might one day be paid in digital pounds or Amazon dollars.

In the US there are several companies, such as eCash Technologies (www.ecashtechnologies.com), which are developing e-cash systems. But for these systems to become commercially used on a wide scale, they'll have to inspire confidence and trust among the online industry and consumers.

The founder of Unipalm-PIPEX, Peter Dawe, has announced his intention to launch a new electronic cash system that could change the face of online payment in the UK. "We need a currency which you can transfer over wires," he says. And Dawe isn't deterred by the resistance his venture's likely to face from retail banks or the credit card companies linked to them.

Dawe's new currency is called eBits, and he'll be piloting the scheme in the first quarter of 2000. The plan is that you'll be able to exchange all existing currencies for eBits, which will be backed by Government investments to act as a reassurance of their worth.

Any successful e-cash system is likely to become a major headache for governments. If people stop using traditional currencies and start buying and selling products from each other electronically, how will governments keep track of the transactions and raise tax?

Pioneers of new online payment systems, like Peter Dawe, see traditional currencies as symbols of an old financial order. They argue that there should be a free market in currencies so that people can choose whatever suits their personal needs.

Dawe's a company, Oakington, (www.oakington.com) has assembled an impressive team which includes George Hayter, former MD of the London Stock Exchange (Trading Markets Division). The team's working on the possibility that eBits will also be used over the phone and through digital TV.

Paying in bulk

Meanwhile, companies such as CyberCash (www.cybercash.com) are tackling the impracticalities of online micropayments. The idea is to see if small payments can be processed in bulk. In time, small payments could be accumulated and deducted in one lump from your bank account or new electronic account.

Smartcards could also play a part in the future of online payments. With an embedded microchip, they look like ordinary credit cards and could be developed for PCs so you could use them to send your e-cash to someone else. Or they could let you carry around your e-cash so you could spend it in traditional shops as well as online.

A host of possibilities are being created thanks to the potential of Net technology. Credit cards could be developed to handle electronic cash and online loyalty reward schemes. In the future, your credit card could also hold your e-cash and Beenz.

The people who argue that e-cash will always be better and safer than existing credit card payments ignore a number of questions. What are the chances of e-cash being faked? Electronic counterfeiting is certainly a possibility. And how safe are virtual wallets? If your PC crashed and your virtual wallet was saved on the hard drive, would you lose your virtual money?

New currencies

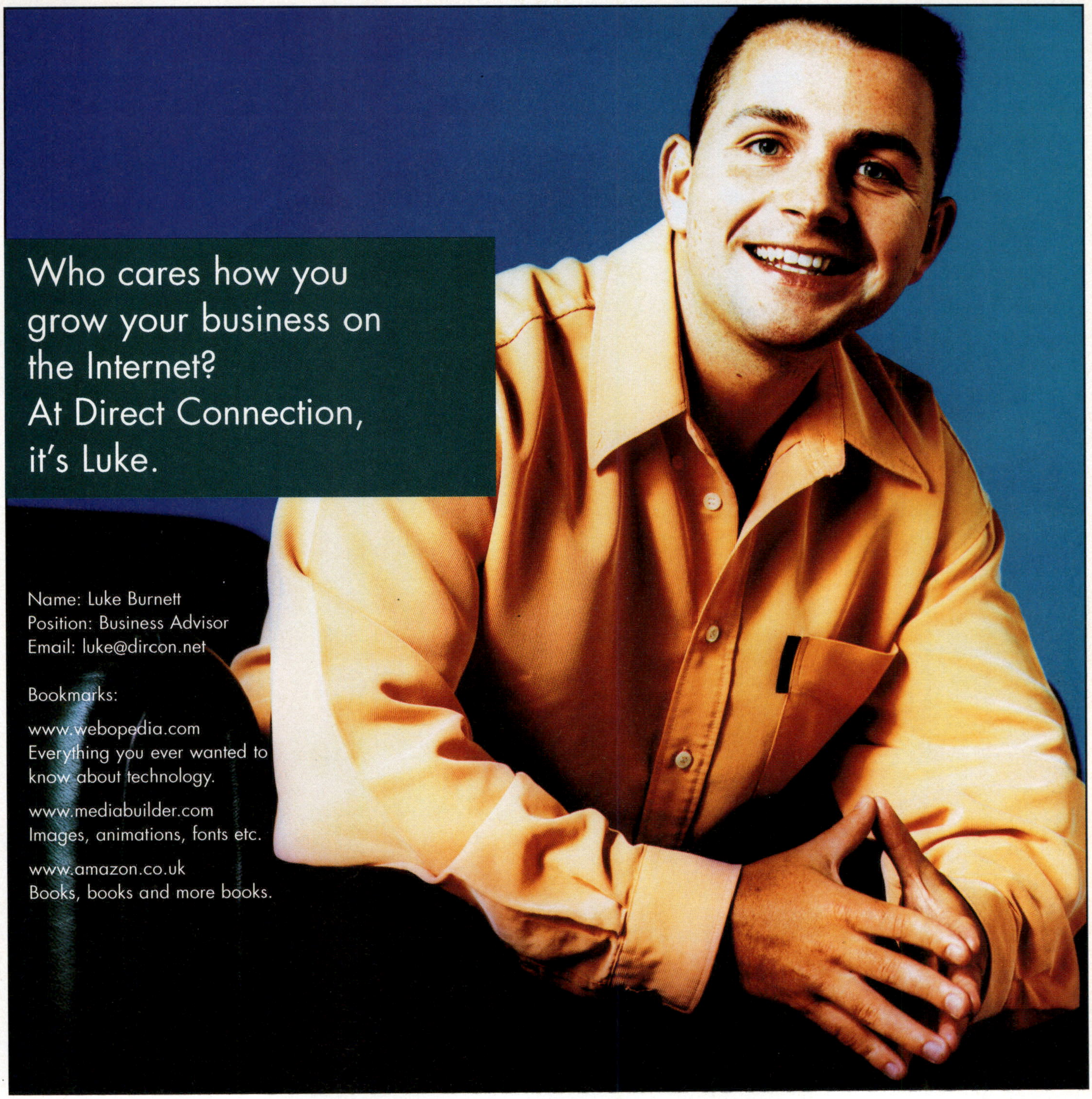
Companies like Visa and Mastercard have brand names that give them a distinct advantage in the battle between online payment systems. Companies pushing independent e-cash systems need to raise consumer awareness. It'd be a lot easier for brands like Microsoft, Netscape or Yahoo! to issue a new currency. And that's a possibility can't be ruled out.

Online auction houses might have a lot to gain from having their own e-cash systems. They'd have greater control of the selling and buying process and could reassure customers about the integrity of their site's transactions.

But it's still early days, and organisations like Which? Online remain sceptical about credit cards ever being superseded. Which?'s Alan Stevens thinks credit cards are in a strong position because they're already accepted internationally and people like to have all their different payments on one bill.

"I don't think Internet currencies will take over," he says. "I think credit cards are going to rule the market for years."

It's easy to talk up the implications of new technology. Many thought email would kill off the post office, but it hasn't. But technology has already had a big impact on the way we spend our money. Cards have become the preferred choice over cash, and cheques are now seen as clumsy and time-consuming. It could be that one of the payment technologies emerging now online could be the next development that revolutionises the way money changes hands. im



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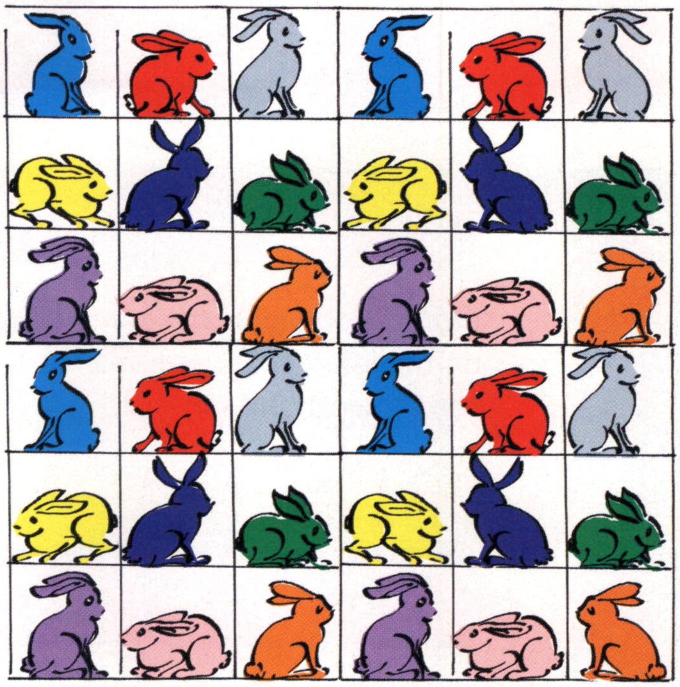

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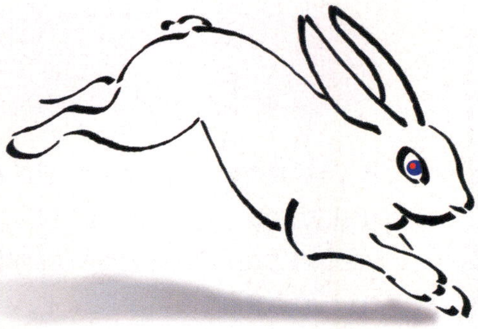

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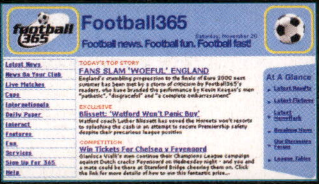

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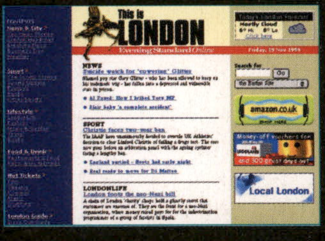

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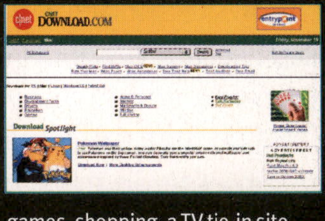

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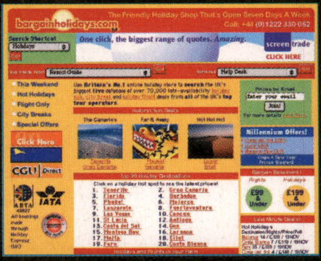
EMAP Online is one of the UK's most successful Internet publishing companies. The company has nine sites, mainly concentrating on the holiday and entertainment sectors. The list include the A2B brand covering Airports, Europe and Travel. Other travel sites are 1Ski, Bargainholidays, Board-it and Escape Routes (in conjunction with magazine publisher Emap Elan).On the entertainment side, the company operates online booking service Aloud.com, and the What's On Stage theatre database.



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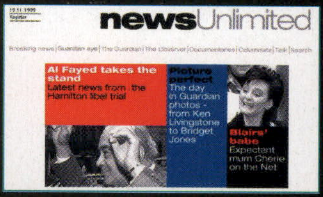
www.guardianunlimited.co.uk

In 1998, the Guardian newspaper's new Unlimited brand was established, allowing it to branch out online. It initially launched sports sites covering football and cricket, a new online presence for the paper and a separate news service. 1999 saw the brand applied to film , work, the lucrative jobs sector, education and shopping. The company didn't stop there – it added Books Unlimited and Money Unlimited to is repertoire before the year was out.


newsUnlimited

Al Fayed takes the stand
Latest news from the Hamilton libel trial

Picture perfect
The day in Guardian photos - from Ken Livingstone to Bridget Jones

Blairs' babe
Expectant mum Cherie on the Net

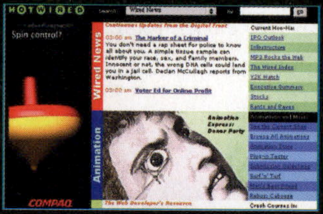
www.footballunlimited.co.uk
www.cricketunlimited.co.uk
www.newsunlimited.co.uk
www.filmunlimited.co.uk
www.workunlimited.co.uk
www.jobsunlimited.co.uk
www.educationunlimited.co.uk
www.shoppingunlimited.co.uk
www.booksunlimited.co.uk
www.moneyunlimited.co.uk

Essential

Wired Digital/Lycos

www.wired.com

The Wired Digital portfolio includes HotWired, HotBot, a how-to section for Web developers called Webmonkey, Wired News and Suck, featuring unpopular opinions on pop culture. When Wired Digital split from the printed *Wired* magazine, Lycos acquired the company, including its five prime Web services. The Lycos Network also owns the eponymous search engine, online communities Tripod and Angelfire, a people finder called WhoWhere, free Web-based email MailCity and free online organiser MyTime.com.


HOTWIRED
Spin control?
Wired News
Animation
COMPAQ

www.hotwired.com
www.hotbot.com
www.webmonkey.com
www.wired.com
www.suck.com
www.lycos.com
www.whowhere.com
www.tripod.com
www.angelfire.com
www.mailcity.com
www.mytime.com

Essential

Yahoo!

www.yahoo.com

Over the years, Yahoo! has become *the* search engine of choice. The service has added worldwide versions (including a UK site), personalisation in the form of My Yahoo!, Yahoo! Chat, Yahoo! Classifieds, and a site aimed at children, Yahooligans!. Yahoo! has its own free Web-based email service, Yahoo! Mail and has bought GeoCities and Broadcast.com to give it a foothold in the community and broadcast sectors respectively.

YAHOO! UK & IRELAND
CLICK HERE FOR A 30 DAY FREE TRIAL
Search
Arts & Humanities
News & Media

www.yahoo.co.uk
www.yahooligans.com
www.geocities.com
www.broadcast.com

Essential

Carlton Online

www.carltononline.com

Formerly under the aegis of Carol Dukes and now in the hands of MD Philip Rooke, the media company has launched three impressive sites – Jamba, the online games site, Popcorn the lads' movie news site and Simply Food the comprehensive grub haven on the Net. All the sites are already multiple award-winners.

www.jamba.co.uk
www.popcorn.co.uk
www.simplyfood.co.uk

jamba
Where the Web is fun
CARLTON
LUCKY LETTERS
TOP OF THE POPS
WIN a Sony CD Mini Hi-fi with Mini Disc
REGISTER OR LOG IN
★ PLAY on jamba TODAY ★
★ WIN on jamba TODAY ★
WIN on That's A Wrap
WIN on Spellbound
WIN on Carry On Bingo
Friday Frenzy
Footie Trivia
Load iChat
Flutter
FREE

Essential

United News & Media

www.unm.com

The two most famous sites to bear the Dot brand are DotMusic and DotJobs, since they have the most appeal for the consumer market. But the prolific brand also covers industries such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, packaging, farming, food, printing, medicine, electricals, timber and food ingredients.

DOTJOBS
jobs by market sector
REED
Your next job is looking for you!

www.mfuk.com
www.dotmusic.co.uk
www.dotjobs.co.uk
www.dotelectronics.co.uk
www.dotfinechem.com
www.dotpackaging.com
www.dotfarming.com
www.dotfood.com
www.dotprint.com
www.dotpharmacy.com
www.electronics-electrical.com
www.worldwidewood.com
www.fi-events.com

At the time of going to press, UNM and Carlton were in merger talks. If the deal gets past the Competition Commission and shareholders, the new company will be worth around £8 billion.

»

'FREE' DOMAIN NAMES?

PULL THE OTHER ONE!

Why get stung?

Why pay £40 a year for a 'free' domain name, then get stung to use it? All our domains include free email and web forwarding for life. Use your domain name from day one at no extra cost.

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($30 per year NIC fee)
One-time set-up fee only £49.

.CO.UK £5
(£2.50 per year Nominet fee)
One-time set-up fee only £29.
(Ongoing admin fee £9 per year)

* prepaid registrations only ($70 otherwise)

www.nicnames.co.uk

nic names
Make a name
for yourself

All clients agree to our terms and conditions. All prices exclude VAT

TV and Movies

Internet Movie Database

The ultimate movie reference source lists 250,000 film titles and three million filmography entries. IMDb was snapped up by the Amazon Empire making it even easier to buy the book of the film.
http://uk.imdb.com

Essential

Ain't It Cool News

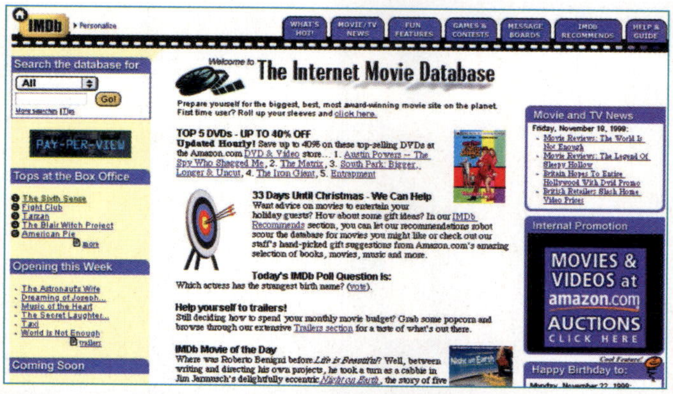
Started by film buff Harry Knowles, this site now has the power to make or break a new film.
www.aint-it-cool-news.com

Blair Witch

Amazingly, this site was launched in summer 1998, over a year before the film came out to act as a precursor to the movie and to build up the hype. It was the first time a movie site had been used as an extension of the film. What a marketing ploy.
www.blairwitch.com

Channel 4

Channel 4 was one of the first broadcasters to get on the Web, and is the only site to have received our accolade of Site of the Month twice (February '97 and July '99).
www.channel4.com



Welcome to The Internet Movie Database

Prepare yourself for the biggest, best, most award-winning movie site on the planet.
First time user? Roll up your sleeves and click here.

TOP 5 DVDs - UP TO 40% OFF
Updated Hourly! Save up to 40% on these top-selling DVDs at the Amazon.com DVD & Video store... 1. Austin Powers -- The Spy Who Shagged Me, 2. The Matrix, 3. South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut, 4. The Iron Giant, 5. Entrapment

33 Days Until Christmas - We Can Help
Want advice on movies to entertain your holiday guests? How about some gift ideas? In our IMDb Recommends section, you can let our recommendations robot scour the database for movies you might like or check out our staff's hand-picked gift suggestions from Amazon.com's amazing selection of books, movies, music and more.

Today's IMDb Poll Question is:
Which actress has the strangest birth name? (vote).

Help yourself to trailers!
Still deciding how to spend your monthly movie budget? Grab some popcorn and browse through our extensive Trailers section for a taste of what's out there.

IMDb Movie of the Day
Where was Roberto Benigni before *Life is Beautiful*? Well, between writing and directing his own projects, he took a turn as a cabbie in Jim Jarmusch's delightfully eccentric *Night on Earth*, the story of five

Tops at the Box Office
1. The Sixth Sense
2. Fight Club
3. Tarzan
4. The Blair Witch Project
5. American Pie
more

Opening this Week
- The Astronaut's Wife
- Dreaming of Joseph...
- Music of the Heart
- The Secret Laughter...
- Taxi
- World is Not Enough
trailers

Coming Soon

Movie and TV News
Friday, November 19, 1999:
- Movie Reviews: The World Is Not Enough
- Movie Reviews: The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow
- Britain Hopes To Entice Hollywood With Dvd Promo
- British Retailers Slash Home Video Prices

Internal Promotion
MOVIES & VIDEOS at amazon.com AUCTIONS CLICK HERE

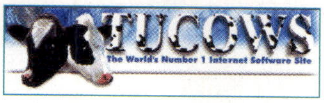
Cool Feature!
Happy Birthday to:
Monday, November 22, 1999:

IT

Essential

TUCOWS

Download anything from games and PDA add-ons to Linux OS applications.
www.tucows.com



Download.com

The site alone has been responsible for a million downloads of ICQ and over a third of a million downloads of WinAmp, the MP3 shareware player.
www.download.com

Superscape

The 3D showcase where old faves like the Millennium Dome rub 3D shoulders with Venice, Berlin and over 600 others.
www.superscape.com

Shockrave

Check in regularly for frequent updates of the best of breed Shockwave and Flash games including your fix of South Park.
http://shockrave.macromedia.com

MP3.com

The ultimate source for downloadable digital music, offering tens of thousands of songs.
www.mp3.com

Essential

Apple

Apple's site has sections for news, buying Apple products, Mac support, education, design and publishing, and the company itself.
www.apple.com

Presenting the all-new iMac.

Dell

Dell's site offers deals on Dell boxes for the home, home office, small business, large business, large accounts and the public sector.
www.dell.com

JavaWorld

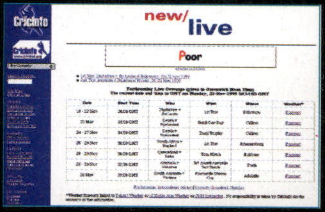
JavaWorld offers tips, features, guides, competitions and news for and about Java and Java users.
www.javaworld.com

Sports and Events

Essential

CricInfo

CricInfo started as a hobbyist labour of love and is now an online religion for its fans. It's even stumped a few umpires with its knowledge of the game.
www.cricinfo.com



TEAMtalk

Sixty-three of the football league's 92 clubs are covered, with in-depth profiles, player analysis and gossip. Good stuff, but run of the mill these days for football sites. So TEAMtalk distinguishes itself from others with its Real Audio reports. It's like listening to ClubCall for free.
www.teamtalk.com

World Cup 98

Online Magic (now Agency.com) brought Flash to a set of rapidly converted devotees with this site. It was truly cosmopolitan in nature; breaking down national boundaries by localising content and producing live match analysis.
www.wc98.com

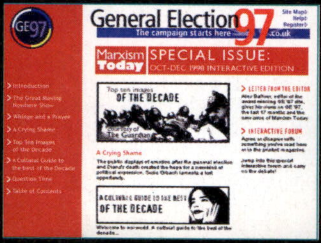
Rugby World Cup 99

Having learned from all the previous world sporting events, the 1999 Rugby World Cup put together a state of the art site with stills and video highlights from every match, as well as profiles of all the teams and players. The site will stay up indefinitely as a matter of record.
www.rwc99.com

Essential

General Election 97

Launched when the Labour Party was still in opposition, this was the first indicator that the Cabinet should start seeking alternative employment. Today, it remains as a time capsule, a legacy to the Online Magic production



team and a tribute to site producer, Michael Martin, who tragically died before its January launch.
www.ge97.co.uk

Budget 98

UUNET, management consultants Deloitte & Touche, and designers RJD New Media teamed up to create this budget-busting site that was planned in a day, compiled in a month and cost "a comfortable five-figure fee". By the end of the project, for every minute of Gordon Brown's hour and three-quarter Budget speech, 4,000 minutes of development work had gone into producing the site.
www.budget98.com

Comic Relief 99

Along with the Beeb's Red Nose Day site (www.rednoseday.beeb.com), the Comic Relief site helped 1999's Comic Relief Event – The Record Breaker. In the end, over £400,000 was donated online – a record in itself. The Pier, as the site was branded, achieved five million page impressions over the campaign.
www.comicrelief.org.uk

Eclipse 99

Given the weather in Devon and Cornwall on 11 August, it's not surprising that the area didn't experience the influx of people it was expecting. Instead, many of us stayed home and settled for whatever percentage of eclipse our local area was destined to get. There were several sites dealing with the 1999 eclipse, but inevitably, the BBC's was the best.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/sci_tech/specials/eclipse_99/default.htm

NetAid

Although the October '99 charity event failed to attract the expected Internet audience of one billion, the site – designed to take over one million hits a minute – did attract just under two and a half million people. It's a great cause, and will hopefully live up to its expectations one of these days.
www.netaid.org

Dome 2000

Experience the Millennium Dome from your armchair. Choose your preferred method of travel – plane, boat, cab or on foot – all views come courtesy of the Superscape 3D download. The site is the ultimate 'try before you buy' marketing tactic and makes a compelling case for a visit. You can even buy tickets online.
www.dome2000.co.uk

»

If you're not on the net you're not in the game

internet magazine
tHe beSt iSP oN tHE PLaNet
GLOBAL INTERNET
December 1998

PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE
April 1999

RECOMMENDED
WHAT PC?
May 1999

With instant communications and an improved flow of information, the Internet is making people, and their businesses, more productive and effective.

At Global Internet we strongly believe in helping small and medium enterprises get started on the Internet. Our range of award-winning, ready-made business solutions are designed for the single workstation, networked office or multi-sited corporation.

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We will provide the network connection that meets the needs of your business. And we are dedicated to give you quality and value backed by a Service Satisfaction Guarantee.

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Microsoft Certified Solution Provider

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Whether you are connecting a small office, a large department or an entire organisation, our Network Connections are designed to meet your needs. Choose one of our basic packages, or talk to a business specialist about your particular requirements and special performance options.

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- Domain name registration or transfer
- Webspace included
- All network packages are supplied with a fully configured and tested router from our range

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*Price excludes VAT @ 17.5%. Details of money back guarantee available upon request. *SMTP Mail Server and appropriate software required.*

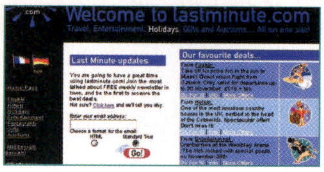
Shopping

Lastminute.com

Essential

Lastminute.com, the bargain travel site, is worth more, on paper, than The Body Shop, and is now launching French and German versions.

www.lastminute.com



You are going to have a great time using lastminute.com! Join the most talked about FREE weekly newsletter in town, and be the first to receive the best deals.
Not sure? Click here and we'll tell you why.

Enter your email address:

Choose a format for the email:
HTML ○ Standard Text ●

QXL

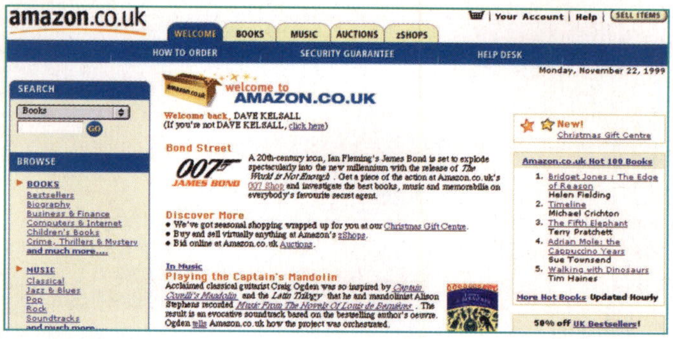
Launched as Quixell, this UK-based online auction was given a three letter acronym makeover. It's now so famous that Antiques Roadshow presenter Hugh Scully has hosted a QXL online auctioning service.

www.qxl.com

Ticketmaster

The first site in the US and the UK to offer online ticket booking. These days you can book tickets to practically anything from the Lion King musical to a football match.

www.ticketmaster.co.uk



Monday, November 22, 1999

welcome to AMAZON.CO.UK

Welcome back, DAVE KELSALL
(If you're not DAVE KELSALL, click here)

Bond Street

A 20th-century icon, Ian Fleming's James Bond is set to explode spectacularly into the new millennium with the release of *The World is Not Enough* . Get a piece of the action at Amazon.co.uk's 007 Shop and investigate the best books, music and memorabilia on everybody's favourite secret agent.

Discover More

- We've got seasonal shopping wrapped up for you at our Christmas Gift Centre.
- Buy and sell virtually anything at Amazon's zShops.
- Bid online at Amazon.co.uk Auctions.

In Music

Playing the Captain's Mandolin

Acclaimed classical guitarist Craig Ogden was so inspired by *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and the *Latin Trilogy* that he and mandolinist Alison Stephens recorded *Music From The Novels Of Louis de Bernières* . The result is an evocative soundtrack based on the bestselling author's oeuvre. Ogden tells Amazon.co.uk how the project was orchestrated.

New! Christmas Gift Centre

Amazon.co.uk Hot 100 Books

1. Bridget Jones : The Edge of Reason
   Helen Fielding
2. Timeline
   Michael Crichton
3. The Fifth Elephant
   Terry Pratchett
4. Adrian Mole: the Cappuccino Years
   Sue Townsend
5. Walking with Dinosaurs
   Tim Haines

More Hot Books **Updated Hourly**

50% off UK Bestsellers!

Amazon

Essential

The best-known Internet company, Amazon is worth millions despite never making a profit. It put the willies up many of the high street bookshops and it's still the best online bookstore.

www.amazon.co.uk

Loot

Browse the ads, place your own, bid at an auction or swap hints and tips in the LootCafé. Over 150,000 ads mean you're bound to find what you want amid the dross.

www.loot.com

Zoom

This UK shopping portal has a wide variety of shops to choose from. There's travel, jobs, fashion and exclusive offers as well as news and sport content.

www.zoom.co.uk

Monster

Monster Board started in 1994, it merged with the Online Career Center (**www.occ.com**) in January 1999 and became Monster. Still one of the biggest and best employment sites.

www.monster.com

BarclaySquare

With the idea of providing an online service to many, Barclay Merchant Services (an offshoot of Barclays), created a shopping complex on the Web. Having a number of high street brands all under one roof looks dated, but it provided the first sniff of e-tail for Argos, Sainsbury, Blackwell's, Eurostar and Campus Travel.

www.barclaysquare.co.uk

eBay

Essential

The biggest and most popular online auction site. It has 1,600 categories, two and a half million items for sale and over five million users. Over 250,000 new items are added daily.

www.ebay.com

Yalplay

Formerly the Internet Music and Video Shop (IMVS), this remains one of the top online music and video stores.

www.yalplay.com

Boo.com

A pioneering e-commerce site that finally launched after many setbacks. Boo.com claims it's the future of shopping, but we'll wait and see.

www.boo.com

CDNow

Another Internet old-timer, launched in 1994. CDNow offers a huge variety of CDs. The site has recently started selling videos and DVDs too.

www.cdnow.com

Newspapers and magazines

The Electronic Telegraph

The newspaper that thrust the UK press into the digital age. As well as reading today's issue, you can search as far back as 1994. This site can rightfully lay claim to being an online institution after winning a hattrick of Newspaper Web awards.

www.telegraph.co.uk

CNN

American-led, but as close as it's possible to come to a total news resource. Personalise your page to get the news stories you want.

www.cnn.com

Silicon News

This TV news and recruitment network is aimed squarely at IT professionals – uncoincidentally the market segment containing the majority of online users. Also the first UK site to have its own TV studio to produce news bulletins.

www.siliconnews.com

UpLoaded

At a time when magazines thought Web sites should mirror current editorial, *Loaded* created a new online experience for its Web launch. Now usurped by FHM (**www.fhm.co.uk**) and Maxim (**www.maxim-magazine .co.uk**), UpLoaded remains a testament to the lure of virtual mammaries to many a male.

www.uploaded.com

Financial Times

FTSE or NASDAQ, CBI or TUC, ISA or TESSA? The FT makes sense of the acronyms, bursts the business and financial bubbles, and offers the Net's most user-friendly share portfolio service.

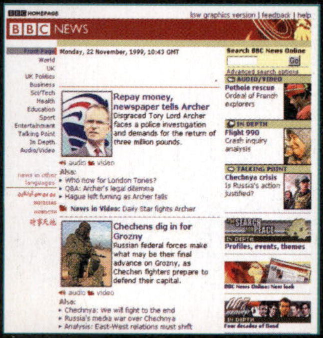
www.ft.com

BBC News

Essential

The debate about whether the BBC should use the license fee to develop a Web site has subsided. Even the most dissident voices have realised that the BBC has the best news site outside of the US. The site also caters for native speakers of Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, Spanish, Russian and even Welsh.

http://news.bbc.co.uk



Monday, 22 November, 1999, 10:43 GMT

Repay money, newspaper tells Archer
Disgraced Tory Lord Archer faces a police investigation and demands for the return of three million pounds.

Also:
- Who now for London Tories?
- Q&A: Archer's legal dilemma
- Hague left fuming as Archer falls

News in Video: Daily Star fights Archer

Chechens dig in for Grozny
Russian federal forces make what may be their final advance on Grozny, as Chechen fighters prepare to defend their capital.

Also:
- Chechnya: We will fight to the end
- Russia's media war over Chechnya
- Analysis: East-West relations must shift

Pothole rescue
Ordeal of French explorers

Flight 990
Crash inquiry analysis

Chechnya crisis
Is Russia's action justified?

The Onion

A lighter look at the news. Keep on top of the stories behind the headlines and enjoy the art of image manipulation. STATshots will also keep you up to date with alternative market research.

www.theonion.com

ITN

Commercial director Owain Pringle joked that his life would be better if he could acquire the domain of Internet Travel Network, (**www.itn .com**). ITN is up against it, but emerges with credit for its daily email news bulletin and host of video reports.

www.itn.co.uk

DejaNews

Now Deja.com, DejaNews was founded in 1995 to act a user-friendly interface to Usenet, the original Internet discussion network. The site is now a dedicated shopping destination that lets you exchange information, knowledge and opinion on any product. The site features more than 600,000 ratings of more than 25,000 products and services and in nearly 800 categories, as well as online discussion forums.

www.deja.com

New York Times

Another stalwart of the online news providers that's undergone a recent overhaul. The New York Times has been online since 1996, and in 1998 was joined by NY Today (**www.nytoday.com**) – New York's equivalent of *The Evening Standard* (**www.thisislondon.co.uk**). In June 1999 it became part of Times Company Digital, consolidating the Company's Internet holdings.

www.nytimes.com

Internet Magazine

And finally... *Internet Magazine* has had a Web presence sine June 1995 – almost as long as any other Web news site. It has had several overhauls since then, the latest of which came in September of 1999. You'll find our ISP listings, vast Bookmarks section and Latest news, as well as software downloads, expert help, product reviews and online guides.

www.internet-magazine.com

Reference

CIA World Factbook

Essential

A great site packed with information about all the countries of the world. You'll find statistics, maps, flags, histories, geographical structure, economics and political leanings.
www.cia.gov/cia/publications

BT PhoneNet UK

Essential

One of the Web's best-kept secrets. It's the online version of directory enquiries. Just enter the name and the area you are looking for, and away you go. Brilliant. **www.bt.com/phonenetuk**

UpMyStreet

UpMyStreet gives you the latest published statistics about where you live – house prices, top schools, council performance, crime rates, and even ambulance response times.
www.upmystreet.com

VisitBritain

The British Tourist Authority's site has searchable maps, hotel details and a host of regional events. The latest attraction is a movie map showing locations for British films.
www.visitbritain.com

Railtrack

Essential

Type in the stations at the start and the end of your journey and you can find out the next departure, any train changes and what time you'll arrive.
www.railtrack.co.uk

NUA

An Irish company specialising in Net-related research, put on its site for all to see. If you've any interest in the Net or the industry, its indispensable.
www.nua.ie/factbook/index.html

Strolling

Become a virtual tourist wandering around the streets of Paris, London and New York. It's all stitched together seamlessly.
www.strolling.com

Open.gov

A revamped portal giving easy access to the workings, departments and initiatives of the UK Government. An excellent resource.
www.open.gov.uk

Yell

The online version of the Yellow Pages has made it even easier to let your fingers do the walking. The service even offers businesses the chance to have a Web presence.
www.yell.co.uk

Scoot

Essential

A hybrid cross between Yell and an entertainment listings magazine, Scoot offers a one-stop shop for local business-related information.
www.scoot.co.uk

Family Search

Home of the Mormon Church's vast database of genealogical info containing four million names.
www.familysearch.org

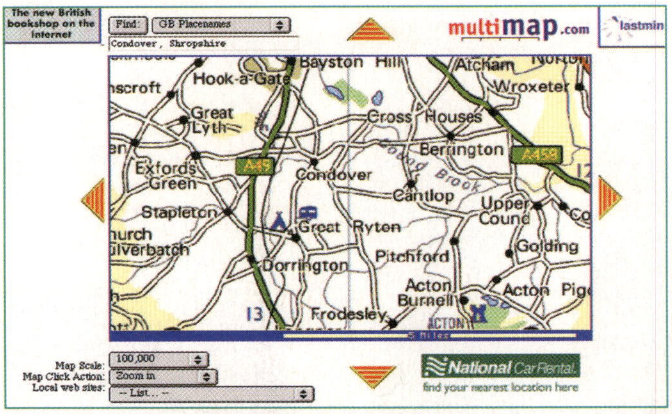
This is Britain

Recently launched portal with all the information you could want about a local area. You can find out all about its creation in our Site of the Month feature on page 28.
www.thisisbritain.co.uk

Multimap

Essential

Multimap started by mapping every London street name using data from the Ordnance Survey. It now covers all of Britain to street level. A-Z beware!
http://uk.multimap.com/map/places.cgi


The new British bookshop on the internet
multimap.com
lastmin
Bayston Hill
Hook-a-Gate
Atcham
Wroxeter
Great Lyth
Cross Houses
Berrington
A49
A458
Exfords Green
Condover
Cantlop
Stapleton
Upper Cound
Great Ryton
Dorrington
Pitchford
Golding
Acton Burnell
Acton Pig
Frodesley
5 Miles
National Car Rental
find your nearest location here

Find: GB Placenames
Condover , Shropshire
Map Scale: 100,000
Map Click Action: Zoom in
Local web sites: -- List... --

Search Engines

Alta Vista

This upstart search engine matured when it ditched its old URL (**www.altavista.digital.com**) and struck out on its own. It's now hoping this relaunch and its decision to enter the portal market will help it to make up lost ground on competitors like Excite and Lycos.
www.altavista.com

Bigfoot

You're going to find it difficult to communication online unless you know a person's email address. To remedy this, Leonard Barshack and James Hoffman co-founded Bigfoot, an email directory you can search by name and location. It's now the largest directory on the Net.
www.bigfoot.com

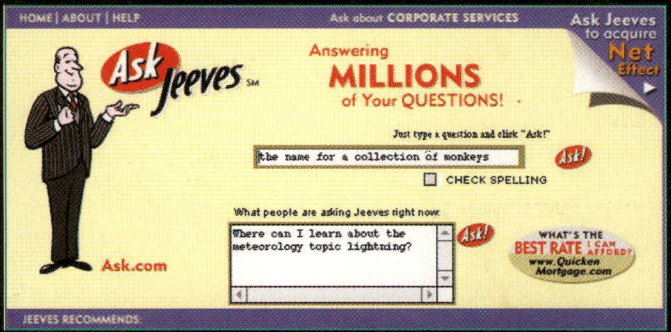
Leisurehunt

A full range of accommodation, from B&Bs to five star hotels, makes this the best online accommodation service. Browse you options, search by name or use the interactive world map for a more general view. The site's also about to get a facelift.
www.leisurehunt.com

Ask Jeeves

Essential

Using an English butler as a metaphor for its searches, Jeeves understands plain language. Simply type in your question and off Jeeves goes to ask the other search engines for their best suggestions.
www.askjeeves.com


HOME | ABOUT | HELP
Ask about CORPORATE SERVICES
Ask Jeeves to acquire Net Effect
Ask Jeeves SM
Answering MILLIONS of Your QUESTIONS!
Ask!
CHECK SPELLING
Ask!
Ask.com
WHAT'S THE BEST RATE I CAN AFFORD? www.QuickenMortgage.com
JEEVES RECOMMENDS:

Just type a question and click "Ask!"
the name for a collection of monkeys
☐ CHECK SPELLING
What people are asking Jeeves right now:
Where can I learn about the meteorology topic lightning?

Portals

BBC

Essential

The BBC's abortive attempt to join the Internet age in 1995 with The BBC Networking Club failed. The waters may have since been muddied by the launch of Beeb (**www.beeb.com**), a site paid for by advertising, but the official BBC portal opens up phenomenal resources. It's possibly the best UK site of the 20th century.
www.bbc.co.uk

AOL

Although AOL remains a proprietary service, this UK portal is a taster of what's available within its high-walled subscription service. The usual suspects of news, sport, entertainment and opinion dominate.
www.aol.co.uk

CompuServe

CompuServe offers up much of its service via its UK site. The flashy opening sequence is pretty enough, but makes finding specific content more difficult. But once you're in the secret garden, the breadth of content in the different sections is breathtaking.
www.compuserve.co.uk

Netscape Netcenter

Essential

BIE (before Internet Explorer), Netscape ruled the Net and its home page was at the top of the food chain. Not surprising, since it was the default home page for many newbies. Other browsers have long since been killed off by the Microsoft giant, but this one refuses to be buried. It cannot be ignored.
www.netscape.com

Netscape Netcenter

Freeserve

The site of the ISP that changed the way the Internet worked. Reason enough for this to be included, you might think. But there's more. Although the site has been revamped with a slightly insipid new look, the content count is as impressive as ever. And you get 10 hours of Internet time for free.
www.freeserve.co.uk

»

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Downloads

Guinness

It did more to advance screensavers than any other site before or since, with 40,000 downloads in the first month. The old favourite is still there, as are the newer, 'Surfer' and 'Swim Black' advertisements. Recent sponsorship of the Rugby World Cup has done little to halt the draught flow, and its ubiquity means the Guinness pub finder is an excellent pub listing.

www.guinness.ie

MOPyFish

According to the 2000 edition of the Guinness Book of Record, Hewlett Packard's MOPyFish 'cyberpet' boasts over 10 million downloads since it was launched a few years ago. and again, this piece of software acts as a screensaver. The MOPyFish turns your desktop into an aquarium where a beautiful pet fish lives, feeds, plays, and sulks. You can download extras for your fish including food, and just like real-life goldfish, if it's neglected too long it will fall ill and die, simply floating to the top of your desktop aquarium.

http://193.129.255.102/mopyfish/mopyindex.html

Dancing Baby

Made famous by appearances on *Ally McBeal*, both the baby and the programme have gone from strength to strength. This *enfant terrible* toddled its way onto office desktops and spawned hundreds of sister sites offering differing degrees of pamper perversity.

http://dancing-baby.net/Baby/NewDanc1.html

Star Wars

One of the biggest box office events ever took place this year – the release of *Star Wars Episode One – The Phantom Menace*. The hype of this movie was incredible, and as a result the official site received an enormous amount of hits. Fans were desperate to download first the teaser trailer, then the full version, and then the four different TV ads, and finally the music video to Duel of the Fates.

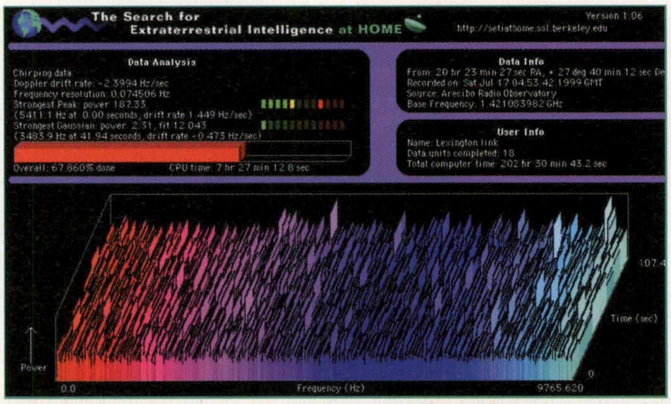
www.starwars.com

SETI@home

Essential

Thousands of Net users have downloaded the SETI@home software to act as their screensaver. The software is more than a screensaver, though, making use of unused processing cycles on idle PCs to help in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. You download a 300kb chunk of data for analysis and when that's finished, you upload your findings and download some new data. The data is collected with the Arecibo Radio Telescope, in Puerto Rico, as part of Project SERENDIP. So far, the project has used 118008.56 years of donated CPU time.

www.seti.org/science/setiathome.html



The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence at HOME

Version 1.06

http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu

Data Analysis

Chirping data

Doppler drift rate: -2.3994 Hz/sec

Frequency resolution: 0.074506 Hz

Strongest Peak: power 187.33

(5411.1 Hz at 0.00 seconds, drift rate 1.449 Hz/sec)

Strongest Gaussian: power 2.31, fit 12.043

(3483.9 Hz at 41.94 seconds, drift rate -0.473 Hz/sec)

Overall: 67.860% done

CPU time: 7 hr 27 min 12.8 sec

Data Info

From: 20 hr 23 min 27 sec RA, + 27 deg 40 min 12 sec De

Recorded on: Sat Jul 17 04:53:42 1999 GMT

Source: Arecibo Radio Observatory

Base Frequency: 1.421083982 GHz

User Info

Name: Lexington link

Data units completed: 18

Total computer time: 202 hr 30 min 43.2 sec

Firsts

JenniCam

Five Web cams positioned around this young lady's house provided a certain legitimacy to desktop voyeurism. It's a fly-on-the-wall photo diary for public viewing, where GuestCams are updated every 20 minutes (MemberCams are updated every two minutes at a cost of $15). What's intriguing is the banality of it all. Intriguing to all but Jenni, who makes $100,000 a year from the site. There have been plenty of busty wannabes trying to fill any clothes vacated by Jenni. But as the first, she'll always be the most famous.

www.jennicam.org

Cool Site of the Day

Now somewhat lost in the noise of awards sites, in 1994 Cool Site was the original and most revered. It's nominated well over 1,000 sites and has extended itself to nominating a site of the month (didn't we have that first?), week and moment.

http://cool.infi.net

Online Surgery

This truly amazing site shows both live and prerecorded surgical procedures. There are chats with the patients before and after surgery, as well the chance to win the plastic surgery operation of your choice. The full list of operations available includes brain surgery, hernia procedure and rebuilding a shoulder, as well as cosmetic operations on ears, breasts, noses and stomachs.

www.onlinesurgery.com

beenz

beenz was the first company to make a good attempt at getting a usable micropayment system up and running. Beenz.com won 'Site to Watch' in the Small to Medium Enterprise category of the FT International Business Web Site of the Year Awards 1999. The so-called loyalty scheme for the Net has over 300,000 users, and the number of transactions made involving beenz has topped 12 million.

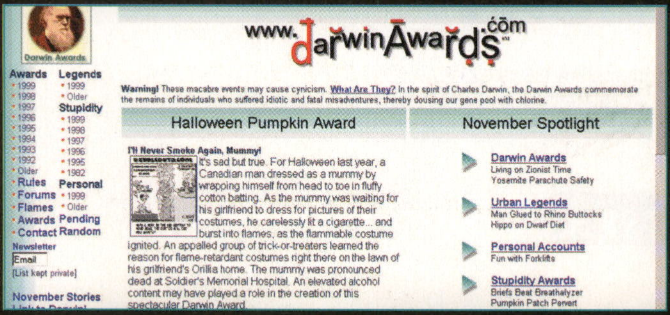
www.beenz.com

Darwin Awards

Essential

Every year since 1992, the Darwin Awards have commemorated individuals who protect our gene pool by making the ultimate sacrifice of their own lives. Darwin Award winners eliminate themselves in an extraordinarily idiotic manner. A legend in its own Web space.

www.darwinawards.com



www.darwinAwards.com

Warning! These macabre events may cause cynicism. What Are They? In the spirit of Charles Darwin, the Darwin Awards commemorate the remains of individuals who suffered idiotic and fatal misadventures, thereby dousing our gene pool with chlorine.

Halloween Pumpkin Award

I'll Never Smoke Again, Mummy!

It's sad but true. For Halloween last year, a Canadian man dressed as a mummy by wrapping himself from head to toe in fluffy cotton batting. As the mummy was waiting for his girlfriend to dress for pictures of their costumes, he carelessly lit a cigarette... and burst into flames, as the flammable costume ignited. An appalled group of trick-or-treaters learned the reason for flame-retardant costumes right there on the lawn of his girlfriend's Orillia home. The mummy was pronounced dead at Soldier's Memorial Hospital. An elevated alcohol content may have played a role in the creation of this spectacular Darwin Award.

November Spotlight

Darwin Awards
Living on Zionist Time
Yosemite Parachute Safety

Urban Legends
Man Glued to Rhino Buttocks
Hippo on Dwarf Diet

Personal Accounts
Fun with Forklifts

Stupidity Awards
Briefs Beat Breathalyzer
Pumpkin Patch Pervert

Egg

This Prudential off-shoot has become the most successful online bank to date. You can now only register via the Web, and despite problems with registering, there's still a queue waiting to add to the six billion pounds already invested.

www.egg.com

Playboy

Described in issue 4 of *Internet Magazine* as a "well designed entry from a top shelf publisher", the site hasn't changed in that respect. Playboy now has chatrooms, various clubs, an agony aunt, Web casts, streaming video and the inevitable pictures.

www.playboy.com

GeoCities

Build it and they will come. Except you don't even have to build it these days. Get the punters to build it themselves. If they're building pages, they'll bookmark the page, tell their friends and come back. A simple premise, and an amazing success story. There's 15Mb of free space on offer, and we can't wait to see how you use it. Now part of the major player, Yahoo!

www.geocities.com

The Spot

The first-ever Net soap, this award-winning site now looks dated – not least because it urges you to upgrade to Netscape 3 to view. But you can still go back and meet the characters, go behind the scenes, and check out the journal entry for Spotnik the dog.

www.thespot.com

Hotmail

So its owned by Microsoft. So its suffered a few security glitches in the past few months. Don't let this put you off. Hotmail is the largest provider of Web-based email and almost single-handedly responsible for the growth of cybercafés around the world.

www.hotmail.com

FedEx

Another entry into the *Guinness Book of Records* 2000 edition, this time for the company that saved the most paper (two billion sheets a year) by transferring services to the Internet. FedEx was the first company to introduce online parcel tracking and it made for riveting viewing as well as massive profits.

www.fedex.com

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Galleries & Museums

If you can't tell your Manet from your Monet or a barometer from a thermometer, there's a site that can help. **Mark Whitehead** gives you a guided tour of the best sites available. Just don't touch anything...

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J. CARTER BROWN
Director, National Gallery of Art
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exhibition entrance
$3.00
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Visiting an art gallery or museum can be frustrating. Long queues, crowded rooms and the chance that the exhibit you most wanted to see is no longer on display, can make culture seem less accessible than it should be.

Many galleries and museums are realising that a Web site can provide the perfect supplement to their real-world presence. Visitors can catch up on sights they've missed, get a much closer look at exhibits and find out how much more they could see by visiting the buildings themselves. Some museums welcome email feedback, and offer chatrooms for further discussion among budding art-critics. The National Science Museum (**www.nmsi.ac.uk**), for example, encourages you to suggest future online exhibits.

Most major galleries and museums in the world are on the Internet, and just as each site varies in tone and design, so the works on display vary from site to site. Some sites provide special online exhibits and access to materials otherwise kept in storage. Their Web sites are online archives for material they don't have display space for. Others display the bare minimum required to liven up the text.

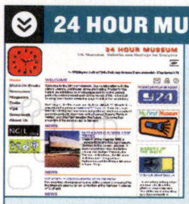
Obvious candidates for interesting sites do, on occasion, prove disappointing, such as the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) which has suspended its site during the museum's own closure, while the Uffizi in Florence (**www.uffizi.firenze.it**) remains inaccessible.

Those who thirst for knowledge will have no problem finding their way around as there are several dedicated links sites. Directories such as Yahoo! (**www.yahoo.co.uk**) have their own listings for Museums and Galleries, while World Arts Resources (**www.world-arts-resources.com**) is a specialist search engine.

As well as official sites, there are more and more sites dedicated to displaying treasures that aren't always accessible through actual or virtual museum visits. Among the best are WebMuseum (**http://lot49.tristero.com/wm**) and the Art Museum Image Consortium project (**www.amico.org**) which has 50,000 thumbnail artwork images online and rising.

Visiting museums' own sites is always the best first stop though, so turn over for our own gallery of the best on the Web. And if you're thinking of starting your own online art emporium, remember it's easy to copy the images of works and exhibits, but most sites are copyrighted. If you want to persevere, it's always best to check on copyright before creating your Damian Hurst tribute site or Rembrandt screensaver.

24 HOUR MUSEUM



Funded by the department for Culture, Media and Sport, the 24 Hour Museum provides access to UK's major museums, art galleries, historic houses and heritage attractions. It's a portal and directory for over 2,000 such bodies. The information is accessible in a number of ways including the museum finder, a magazine, downloadable info packs and a children's section. Probably the only site to be considered a bona fide museum.

www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

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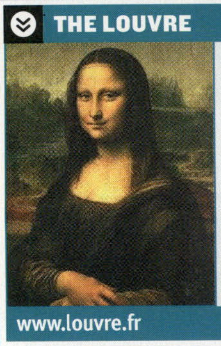
INTERNATIONAL ART GALLERIES

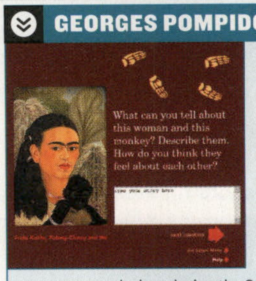
THE LOUVRE



Quick-loading thumbnail images make visiting the Louvre's site a pleasure, click on each work for enlargements and detailed histories. The Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo are present and correct, plus many other major works from each department.

www.louvre.fr

GEORGES POMPIDOU CENTRE

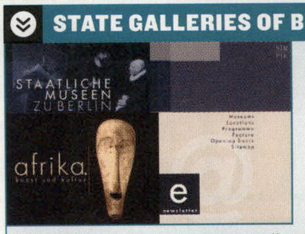


What can you tell about this woman and this monkey? Describe them. How do you think they feel about each other?

A slightly awkward packing-case motif hides links to exhibitions of Kandinsky and Picasso as well as Realtime /Quicktime files of video works. Also has a Musees Nationaux Recuperation project to recover artworks lost during the Second World War.

www.cnac-gp.fr

STATE GALLERIES OF BERLIN

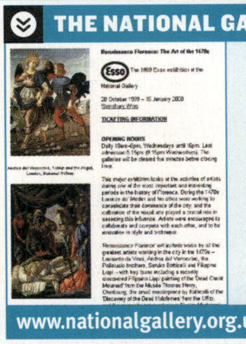


Although still working on providing an English-language version, this impressive site has pages on all of Berlin's major art museums as well as special online exhibits which currently include the much-discussed Sensation show, Gauguin and African Art.

www.smb.spk-berlin.de

UK ART GALLERIES

THE NATIONAL GALLERY



Displays exhibits from its collection of Western European art from 1260 to 1900. The site divides into the Gallery's respective period-themed wings. Thumbnail and enlarged versions are available, along with discussions of each work.

www.nationalgallery.org.uk

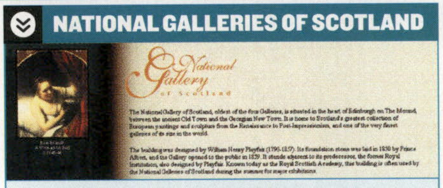
TATE GALLERY

Tate Future Plans Tate Britain

Gives you links to the Tate Galleries in London, Liverpool and St.Ives, and details the future expansion plans for Bankside. The Tate is working on a project to make its entire collection available online. You'll find about 8,000 works accessible through an A-Z index of artists.

www.tate.org.uk

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND

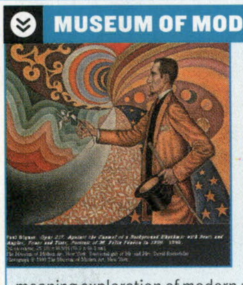


Linking the four major galleries in Edinburgh, this site looks impeccable, but its image content is limited to picture selections that are flashed up alongside a detailed history of the corresponding gallery/exhibition. It's a shame you can't see more.

www.natgalscot.ac.uk

AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

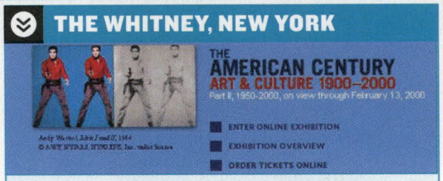
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NY



Only solo exhibitions are available online, but there's a good selection, well displayed, including Pollock, Picasso and Cindy Sherman. Also available is Dadabase, MoMA's online library of art resources and Art Safari, a cheesy but well-meaning exploration of modern art for all the family.

www.moma.org

THE WHITNEY, NEW YORK



THE AMERICAN CENTURY ART & CULTURE 1900–2000

Part II, 1950-2000, on view through February 13, 2000

ENTER ONLINE EXHIBITION

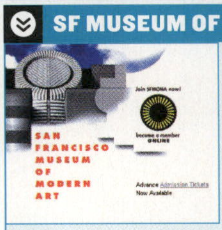
EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

ORDER TICKETS ONLINE

Sober and scholarly but by no means dull, the Whitney's site focuses on a different artist each month, complete with scrolling slide-show. It also proudly displays recent acquisitions and a part of the site is given over to its most famous collection, the works of Edward Hopper.

www.echonyc.com/~whitney

SF MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



Modestly illustrating its own architecture and collections past, present and future, this site also includes a link to the Bay Area Artfinder, which features fascinating sample displays from many of San Francisco's non-profit and artist-run galleries.

www.sfmoma.org

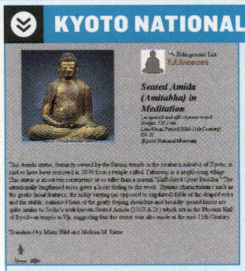
ARTEFACTS MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM

A well thought out and organised site. Its collection pages are still under construction, but the easily-navigated exhibitions catalogue is a pleasure to use, giving you detailed descriptions of exhibits such as the Rosetta Stone, while still leaving you with plenty that's worth visiting.

www.british-museum.ac.uk

KYOTO NATIONAL MUSEUM



Simply designed, this site includes many beautiful and closely-described examples of the treasures from the temples of ancient Japan as well as a primer in Japanese art history. It also has an excellent interactive museum guide for children.

www.kyohaku.go.jp

KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

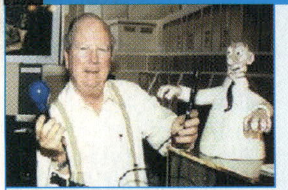
Special Exhibitions : Exotica

A Viennese museum that stands as a tribute to the collecting ability of the Hapsburgs. Its Web site displays many exhibits from the eight specialist collections including Egyptian art, sculpture, coins, along with discussions and solid historical information.

www.khm.at

MUSEUM ODDITIES

QUESTIONABLE MEDICAL DEVICES



Bob McCoy welcomes you to his Quackery Hall of Fame. Terrifying, informative and hilarious, it includes potted biographies of great American quacks plus full sales pitches on products like the Recto-rotor, the foot-powered breast enlarger and the ever-popular prostate gland warmer.

www.mtn.org/quack

BRITISH LAWNMOWER MUSEUM

Copyright British Lawnmower Museum

A true one-off, the museum itself houses over 200 restored British mowers, a tantalising sample of which are displayed here. A modest but beautifully designed site particularly worth checking out for its Mowers of the Rich and Famous collection.

http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/gf86

6TH FL MUSEUM AT DEALEY PLAZA

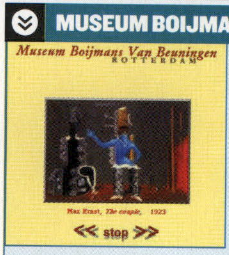
THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM AT DEALEY PLAZA
Home Page
A Kennedy Celebration

A visit to the School Book Depository site is a must for Kennedy assassination buffs. Images are sparse, but there are written descriptions, plus stills from the Zapruder footage. The site's highlight is its exclusive Webcam broadcast of the view from the Sniper's Perch.

www.jfk.org

spotlightonGalleries & Museums

MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN



A beautifully arranged and designed site that contains selections from each of its departments, ranging from the Middle Ages to the present day. Works by Rubens, Rembrandt and Magritte are among the many represented and discussed. There's also the chance to see further exhibits as slide shows.

www.boijmans.rotterdam.nl

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUMS

New York
Guggenheim.org
Berlin
Bilbao
Venice

Six sites for the price of one – you get links to each of the Guggenheim Museums in Bilbao, Venice, Berlin and the original in New York. Scroll through the simple menu of the many exhibitions, past and present, and you'll find varied displays and plenty of discussions.

www.guggenheim.org

STATE HERMITAGE

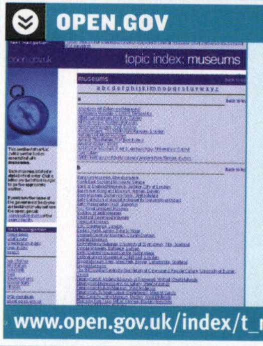
VIRTUAL TOUR MAPS
FIRST FLOOR
GROUND FLOOR

From prehistoric to Western European art, oriental sculpture to a tour of the Winter Palace, Russia's State Hermitage site covers almost all bases. Its Digital Collection is truly impressive – it lets you wander through a virtual gallery that includes much of its vast collection.

www.hermitagemuseum.org

GENERAL MUSEUM LINKS

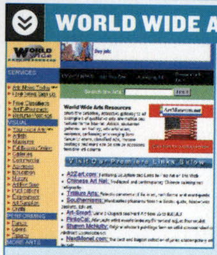
OPEN.GOV



Part of the Open.gov's Web site topic index is an A-Z of hundreds of UK public sector art galleries and museums links. All the big names are here, as well as a wealth of local and special interest sites, making for a perfect afternoon's browsing.

www.open.gov.uk/index/t_museums.htm

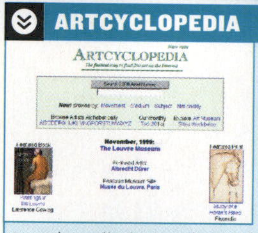
WORLD WIDE ART RESOURCES



Nicknamed 'the Yahoo! of the art world', WWAR has thousands of links for artists, museums, performing arts, art for sale and even artists' materials. Artists are encouraged to submit their own Web sites. When browsing you'll need to know your stuff, as many sites are categorised by medium and movement rather than by country or alphabet.

www.world-arts-resources.com

ARTCYCLOPEDIA

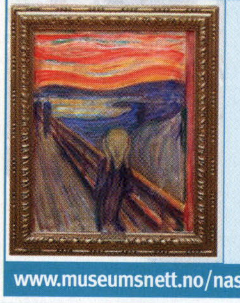


Launched this year, Artcyclopedia is slightly less overwhelming than World Wide Art Resources. Its A-Z list of over 6,000 artists provides direct links to works on display in galleries' Web sites. It has recently added pages that give you alphabetically-arranged links to US and non-US gallery sites.

www.artcyclopedia.com

ARTISTS' COLLECTIONS

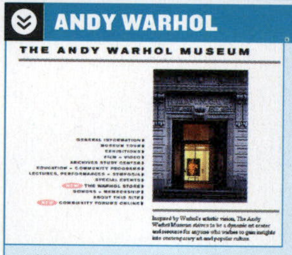
EDVARD MUNCH



The home of Munch's work, this page at the Norwegian National Gallery's site has an excellent biog of the expressionist artist, supplemented throughout with chronological links to over 30 of his works including, The Scream.

www.museumsnett.no/nasjonalgalleriet/munch

ANDY WARHOL



Housing over 3,000 of his works, the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh is a little selfish with what it's willing to show online, but the potted biog and links to other galleries it's loaned works to help fulfil some of this site's promise.

www.clpgh.org/warhol

VINCENT VAN GOGH

The Collection

This gallery was founded upon the works owned by Vincent's brother Theo, but only 14 paintings of over 200 are displayed here. An illustrated biographical section and works by Van Gogh's contemporaries including Gauguin and Lautrec help flesh out this interesting site.

www.vangoghmuseum.nl

SCIENCE MUSEUMS

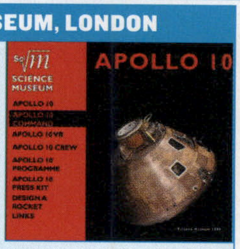
THE EXPLORATORIUM

www.exploratorium.edu

Attractions on this excellent San Fransisco science site include an archived Webcast of the 1999 eclipse and a section on earthquakes. The material here should keep you browsing for hours.

www.exploratorium.edu

SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON



From the story of Dolly the sheep to a Quicktime VR movie from inside the command module of Apollo 10, the range and imagination of the Science Museum Web site's 'Exhiblits' make it as informative and entertaining as a visit to the museum itself. They're only one part of this site, so be prepared to stay a while.

www.nmsi.ac.uk

NAT MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & TECH

Conservation of a Late Nineteenth Century McLaughlin Piano Box Buggy

Emphasising Canadian scientific achievements, this site has features the history of washing machines and electronic music, puzzles for the kids and the lowdown on the McLoughlin Piano Box Buggy.

www.science-tech.nmstc.ca

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Experience the thrill of life amongst the dinosaurs. Robotic technology allows you to witness a prehistoric spectacle as three carnivorous *Deinonychus* feed noisily on a freshly killed *Tenontosaurus.*

Visit the Earth and Life gallery sections for well-realised geological and biological exhibits or spend some time between the Dinosaur Gallery and the museum's vast picture library, but don't forget to check in on the live Webcast from its leafcutter ant-farm.

www.nhm.ac.uk

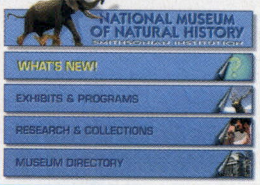
STATE DARWIN

State Darwin Museum

The Russian Museum of Natural History welcomes you in polite and fanciful English to visit exhibitions from past and present, as well as images of exhibits rarely seen on site. Definitely worth visiting for its Cabinet of Curiosities and discussion of the Stages of Nature Cognition.

www.darwin.museum.ru

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



Very image-heavy but worth the wait. Actual museum exhibitions are mainly present in small tasters, but are often backed-up with specially designed online versions. Delights include Dinosaur Hall and a detailed history of the Giant Squid.

www.mnh.si.edu

As your Internet business needs grow...

net start

Netstart is the flexible approach to a business Internet solution. What we mean by flexible is that this account works equally well for both single computer accessing the Internet via an analogue modem or a whole company with hundreds of employees using an Internet server solution connected via 128K ISDN. Whether you are a small or large business, netstart is the solution to your Internet needs as you simply configure and manage your account using an online interface. Whatever your Internet needs are, netstart will grow with your ever expanding business needs. All for the low cost of £9.99+VAT!

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- **Unlimited Pop3 e-mail addresses or SMTP e-mail**
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- **Connection at local call rates**
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net complete

Any company wishing to connect their network to the Internet ought to consider the benefits of having a dedicated and exclusive 'fast path to the Net' permanently connected with a leased line. Advantages are maximum data throughput speeds, 24hr Internet presence and availability and fixed manageable costs. Plusnet will arrange for a dedicated telecom circuit to be installed, this line will be connected to your company's computer network and our Internet network via a router or using the NetPilot Internet Branch Exchange below. The speed of your connection can be upgraded on a modular basis as your requirements grow. A dedicated and direct connection truly empowers your business to capitalise on e-commerce and e-business opportunities. Selling and communicating across the Internet truly is the way forward and with netcomplete your business will be able to really "Work the Internet." At these prices it really is low cost to get a permanent connection!

Capacity	Installation Cost*	London Annual Rental*	Within 50K of Major City*
64K	£500	£3,795.25	£3,795.25
128K	£1,500	£6,645.25	£8,545.25
256K	£1,500	£9,495.25	£11,395.25
2MB	£6,100	£21,845.25	£28,495.25

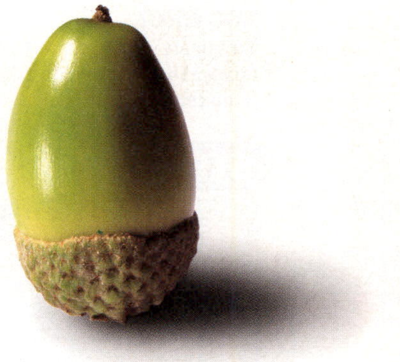
net pilot

Need to put more than one of your companies computer online? Well Internet access is unbelievably easy and controllable with netpilot. It's an integrated, fit-and-forget Internet Branch Exchange, providing everything you'll ever need for secure company-wide email and web browsing in a single box. All PC users connected to your LAN can be given controlled Internet access. You just need a netsart account and an ISDN line while netpilot provides the rest. purchase a netpilot for the low cost of £1495+VAT and get your LAN connected to the Internet!

You won't worry about phone bills going through the roof. You'll be sure that no-one wastes time looking at inappropriate web sites. Installation and management is quick and simple - whether you have a handful of users or hundreds. You don't even need any IT expertise.

The difficult problem of network security has been tackled, too. NetPilot's built-in firewall has been accredited by Checkmark, an independent testing and standards organisation, which found that it equals the security of firewalls from specialist vendors.

For more information on this exciting product visit www.plus.net.uk.



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www.insight.com

*Prices subject to survey

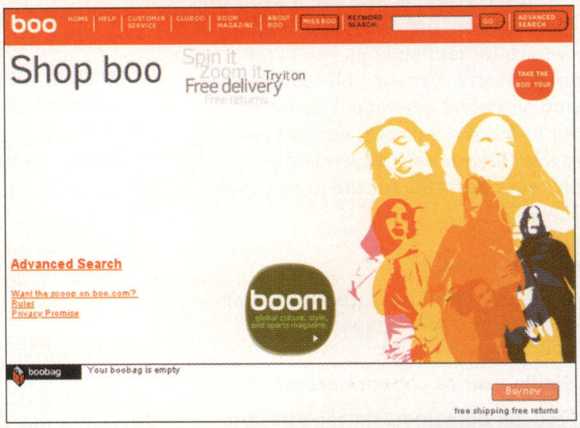
sitesurvey

This month's top sites rated by experts // brief / budget / content / design

Boo.com

www.boo.com

The sports fashion site that's Europe's biggest ever Internet startup finally starts up


boo
HOME
HELP
CUSTOMER SERVICE
CLUBOO
BOOM MAGAZINE
ABOUT BOO
MISS BOO
KEYWORD SEARCH
GO
ADVANCED SEARCH
Shop boo
Spin it
Zoom it
Try it on
Free delivery
Free returns
TAKE THE BOO TOUR
Advanced Search
Want the zooop on boo.com?
Rules
Privacy Promise
boom
global culture, style, and sports magazine
boobag
Your boobag is empty
Buy now
free shipping free returns

The boo.com homepage is the starting point for all your shopping. Miss Boo will then accompany you on your spending spree

Boo.com was the most talked about Net event of 1999. Forget NetAid, this was big. The company hit the venture capital trail and raised enough finance – thought to be around £65 million – to make it Europe's largest ever Internet startup. Promoted as "the first global Internet sports fashion retailer", the site was due to launch in May, then June, then every month until November – when it finally went live to a barely audible fanfare.

Leave this window open to try on more items.
Reset
Click the item on the model to view product details. Click and drag the item to the model to try it on.

The technology problems that held up the launch are still there – you'll need all the latest plug-ins to even see the site. Its more recent delays have been put down to bugs in the Mac version of the site, which they're still trying to fix. "The situation with Macs was a tricky one," explains Dina Chlovak of boo.com's marketing department. "We love the Mac platform, but the enhancements we made just before launch caused a few problems. We had to ask 'Do we launch, or do we delay?'. We decided to launch for PC users."

On a PC, the fully working boo.com is a treat. There's a vast array of top labels in sports fashionwear, from Timberland to Converse, and Fred Perry to DKNY. You can search by brand, activity or product, and when you find something you like, you're offered high quality 2D and 3D visuals.

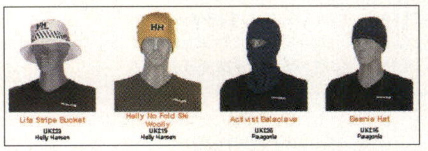
The site's fallen over twice since launch, and has earned some harsh criticism for its high-tech specification. To view the site at anywhere near its full potential, you'll need to have Flash, Java and at least a 56k modem.

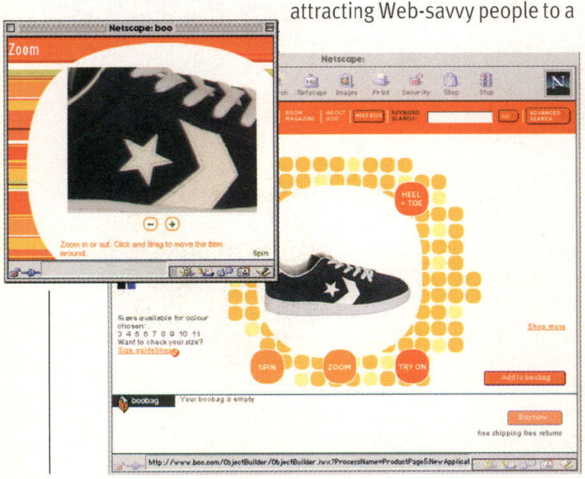
A spokeswoman for boo.com said the site had been developed for "the latest technology available, not the lowest common denominator". Chlovak adds: "We're attracting Web-savvy people to a complex site," she says. "I've always used the Net at work. I don't use it at home. I don't know if other people do. Maybe they can visit the site in their lunch hours." It could cause a few problems on Windows NT networks, though, since they aren't exactly Java-friendly.

But the site's prospects must look rosy, or it wouldn't have attracted all that money and talent. "Why waste time shopping on the high street?" asks Steve Bennett, former global R&D manager at Hewlett Packard, and now the former chief technical officer of boo.com.

There's been probably too much money and time put into boo.com, and too much hype generated, for it to fail. But until it sorts out its technical problems, or the Net gets a lot faster, boo.com is unlikely to make the necessary impact on potential shareholders.

Richard Dinnick


Life Stripe Bucket
UK£23
Helly Hansen
Helly No Fold Ski Woolly
UK£19
Helly Hansen
Activist Balaclava
UK£26
Patagonia
Beanie Hat
UK£16
Patagonia

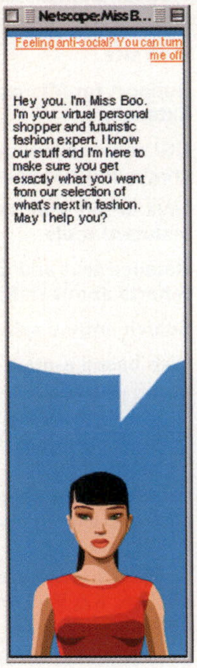

Netscape: boo
Zoom
Zoom in or out. Click and drag to move the item around.
Spin
Netscape:
Netscape
Images
Print
Security
Shop
Stop
BOOM MAGAZINE
ABOUT BOO
MISS BOO
KEYWORD SEARCH
GO
ADVANCED SEARCH
HEEL + TOE
SPIN
ZOOM
TRY ON
Sizes available for colour chosen:
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
Want to check your size?
Size guidelines
Shop more
Add to boobag
boobag
Your boobag is empty
Buy now
free shipping free returns
http://www.boo.com/ObjectBuilder/ObjectBuilder.iwx?ProcessName=ProductPage&NewApplicat

BOO.COM SCORES...

Design	★★★☆☆
Content	★★★★☆

BOO WHO?

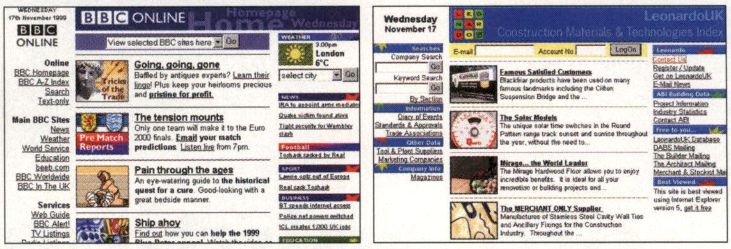
Dressmart www.dressmart.co.uk
Ready2Shop www.ready2shop.com
Shop.com www.shop.com


Netscape: Miss B...

Feeling anti-social? You can turn me off

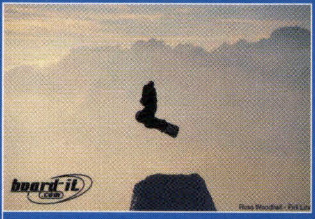
Hey you. I'm Miss Boo. I'm your virtual personal shopper and futuristic fashion expert. I know our stuff and I'm here to make sure you get exactly what you want from our selection of what's next in fashion. May I help you?

SEPARATED AT BIRTH


BBC ONLINE
Homepage
Going, going, gone
The tension mounts
Pain through the ages
Ship ahoy
LeonardoUK
Construction Materials & Technologies Index
Famous Satisfied Customers
The Solar Models
Mirage... the World Leader
The MERCHANT ONLY Supplier

It seems that the bigger the company, the more flattery you attract in the form of imitation. Sites don't come much bigger than the BBC, but it seems Auntie has an admirer. His name is Leonardo. Not DiCaprio, but Leonardo UK – the Construction Materials and Technologies Index. The BBC's site has been around for ages and carries a copyright symbol for 1999. Leonardo UK doesn't seem to have copyright on its site design. Separated at birth, or sibling rivalry? You decide...

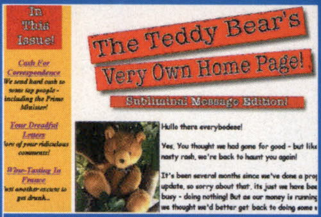
www.bbc.co.uk/www.leonardouk.co.uk



Board-it.com p79

ally-mcbeal.co.uk
THE #1 UK ALLY MCBEAL RESOURCE
Gina Philips Joins The Cast
New Soundtrack
Ode To Ally McBeal Download
Spoilers

Ally-McBeal.co.uk p83


In This Issue!
The Teddy Bear's Very Own Home Page!
Subliminal Message Edition!

Teddy Bear's Home Page p87

DoBeDo

www.dobedo.co.uk

An innovative approach to online chat that's all the rage with the kids in Sweden

Encouraged by its overnight success in Sweden, DoBeDo is hoping to revolutionise Web chat in the UK. With 23 per cent of all 16-26 year olds in Sweden registered users of DoBeDo, the site's mass appeal to its target audience has also meant that its founders could develop an innovative approach to online advertising.

DoBeDo's emphasis is on TV-style entertainment, rather than on the conventional Web chatrooms found at most portals. You interact in a rich graphical environment, full of cartoon characters speaking through speech bubbles against themed backdrops. The site's content depends on who's logged on at the time – select an alter ego and off you go. Guides help you upload your own character image and design your own chat room, and there's a potted history of the island's community of funky characters.

DoBeDo has built a software partnership with California-based supplier of Internet applications, BroadVision (**www.broadvision.com**). Its One-to-One platform gives staff complete control over content and lets DoBeDo give each visitor a dynamic individual experience. Co-founder and technical director Magnus Leijonborg says: "The platform lets us match up visitors, giving us fantastic capabilities to help people find friends with similar interests."

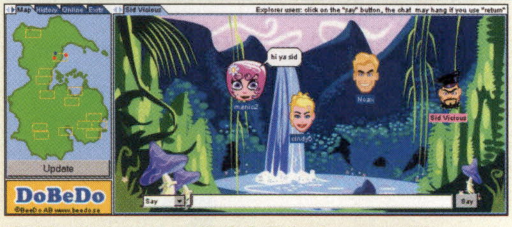
It's also attractive to advertisers. DoBeDo lets them target specific target groups at specific times, mimicking TV advertising. The site also features a bulletin board outlining upcoming sponsored interactive events and competitions. This innovative approach to generating revenue from online entertainment has already encouraged Swedish venture capitalist giant Novare Kapital to put its considerable financial clout behind the project.

Matthew Grice

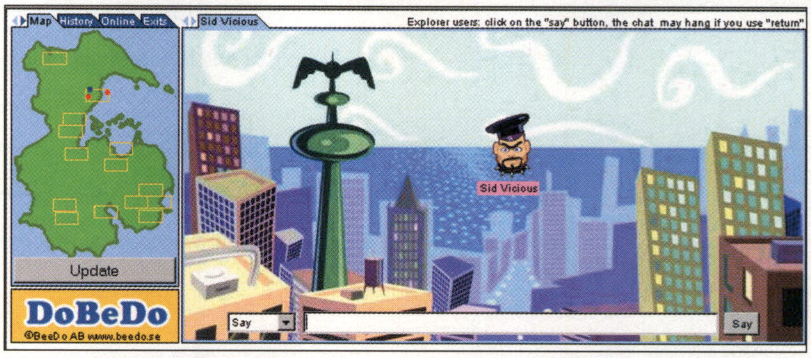
DOBEDO SCORES...

Design	★★★★★
Content	★★★☆☆

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?


Map
History
Online
Exits
Sid Vicious
Explorer users: click on the "say" button, the chat may hang if you use "return"
hi ya sid
Update
DoBeDo
Say
Say

The island's characters, with their distinctive personalities, create the site's convincing soap opera feel. "At the moment, all DoBeDo characters are controlled by people at DoBeDo or by trusted members," reveals Magnus Leijonborg. "We're developing scripts and algorithms that will let us have robots and other automated characters in the DoBeDo world."



Inhabitants of the DoBeDo world chat with you as cartoon characters floating in a funky graphic world

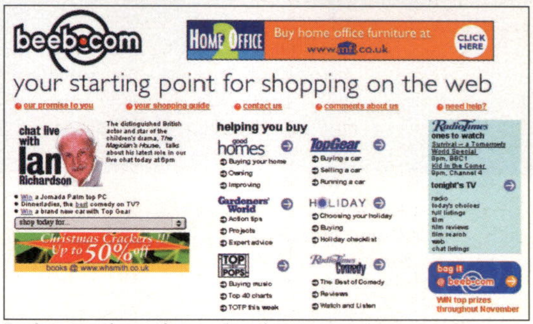
CONVERSE-LY

Yahoo! Chat http://chat.yahoo.com
ChatPlanet www.chatplanet.com
Trouble Chat www.trouble.co.uk/

Beeb

www.beeb.com

BBC site revamp puts e-commerce before content



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Gardeners' World: Action tips, Projects, Expert advice

HOLIDAY: Choosing your holiday, Buying, Holiday checklist

TOP OF THE POPS: Buying music, Top 40 charts, TOTP this week

RadioTimes Comedy: The Best of Comedy, Reviews, Watch and Listen

RadioTimes ones to watch: Survival – a Tomorrow's World Special, 8pm, BBC1; Kid in the Corner, 9pm, Channel 4

tonight's TV: radio, today's choices, full listings, film, film reviews, film search, web, chat listings

bag it @ beeb.com

WIN top prizes throughout November

Beeb.com makes no bones about its new e-commerce angle

The Beeb site has changed. No more the brightly coloured front page that majored on content. Now the home page proudly states that the Beeb is "your starting point for shopping on the Web". The top-notch content is still there, it's just hidden by the commercial reality of making money.

"The Beeb is now an ESP (e-commerce service provider) with online shopping facilities built around our areas of interest," explains David Atter, sales and marketing director of Beeb.com. So, for instance, in the *Top Of The Pops* area you'll find CDs for sale from Yalplay, Amazon and others. The *Top Gear* section has e-commerce links to the AutoTrader and Autobytel Web sites.

But the Beeb doesn't want to be a giant shopping portal linked to every e-commerce site on the planet. "By mid-next year we want to link to the top five suppliers in each category we're interested in," Atter reveals. The Beeb is vetting its e-commerce partners, making sure they offer acceptable service levels and competitive prices.

The Beeb seems to have set itself up as the Honest John of the online shopping world, reassuring us all that buying online is safe. And it has to be said, there's some sensible online shopping advice up there. But at the moment there just aren't enough links to shopping sites to back up the Beeb's ESP claim.

The brightly coloured Beeb design of old has been replaced by black text on a crisp white background. Atter explains that the Beeb site used to differentiate itself from the other BBC sites by design, but "now the site is differentiated by function, so we don't need flashy design". The new site is meant to be neutral and to appeal to visitors of all ages, but it is also, sadly, bland.

Surely all this change and the Beeb's sudden embracing of e-commerce can only add fuel to the rumours that Beeb.com will be spun off from the rest of the BBC? Atter was cagey on this issue, but admitted "we're exploring a number of options and that's one of them".

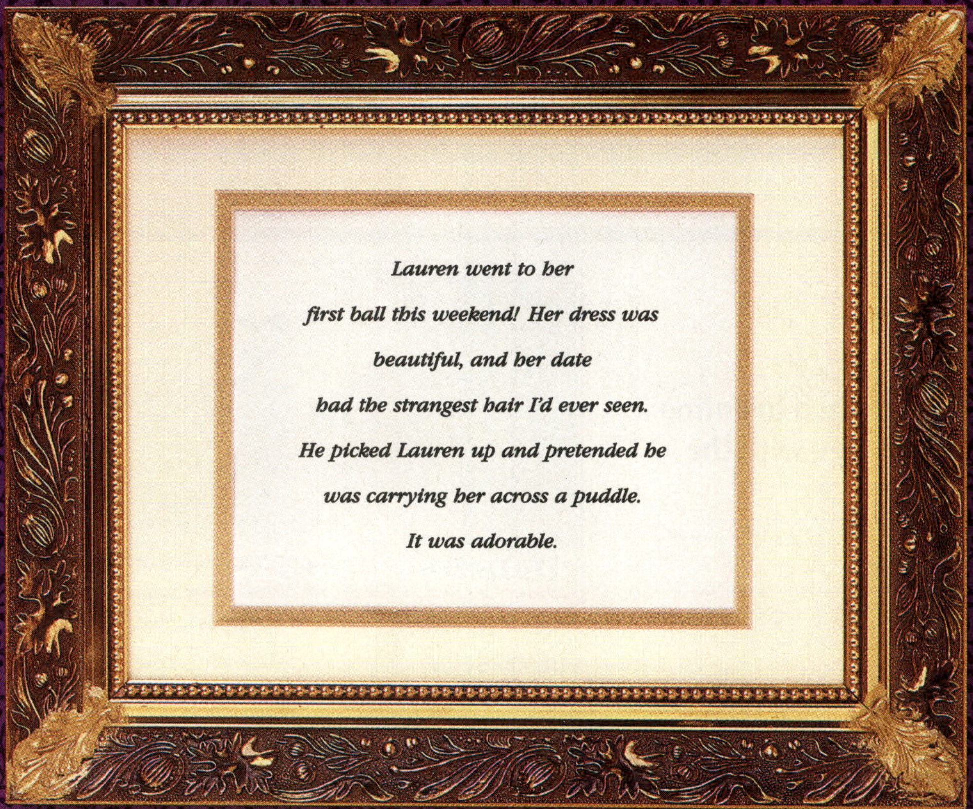
Gail Robinson

BEEB SCORES...

Design	★★★☆☆
Content	★★★☆☆

TV TIMES

Channel 4 www.channel4.com
Channel 5 www.channel5.co.uk
Carlton www.carlton.com



Lauren went to her
first ball this weekend! Her dress was
beautiful, and her date
had the strangest hair I'd ever seen.
He picked Lauren up and pretended he
was carrying her across a puddle.
It was adorable.

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Sometimes words don't say enough.

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Board-it.com

www.board-it.com

An e-commerce portal that's seriously cool

Snowboarding meets the Web at Board-it.com, and it's a match made in heaven. Along with close relatives like skateboarders and surfers, the sport's evangelists are steeped in a design culture that's distinctive, left-field and cutting-edge.

So when faced with the prospect of putting together Emap Online's new portal, Board-it.com's design manager, Vanessa Reid, kept her brief firmly in mind. "It's an e-commerce site – there are other sites if you want things flashing around the screen. If I want to buy a holiday, I just want to go in, buy it and get back to work."

But you'll find plenty of pleasant distractions here. Board-it.com claims to hold the biggest online selection of snowboarding holidays available, but it's also packed with plenty of good stuff that's free. It was inspired by the success of Emap's 1ski portal (**www.1ski.com**).

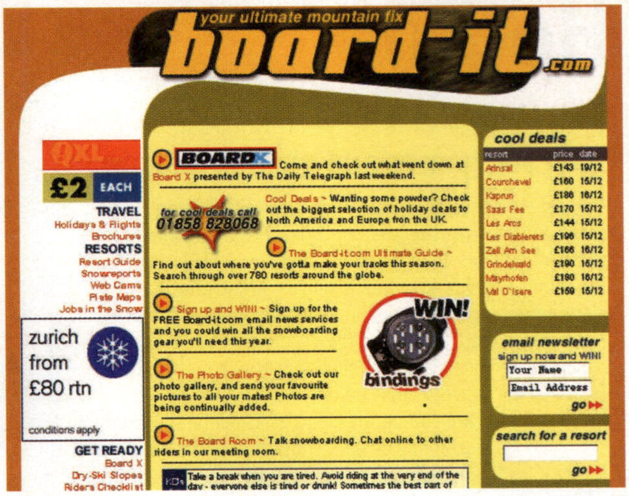
Given the similarities of the two sports, Board-it.com can use a lot of 1ski's content, so you'll find 1ski's detailed interactive guides to some 780 resorts, with pictures from 200 Web cams and over 300 piste maps. It's been repackaged for a different, but allied market – an excellent example of making the most of a valuable resource.

But it's the site-specific features that give the pages character. The snowboarding clinic is particularly good, featuring triple world champion snowboarder Kevin Delaney. Do you want to know how to get maximum air, do an ollie, or just how to stand up? A quick click and a JPEG pops up and shows you how. You can learn how to talk the talk in the Trickionary – a fun glossary of boarding terms so you'll know whether you're stoked, stumped or solid.

Stock SHOT
board-it

The site has the occasional irritant – some of the map JPEGs are unwieldy, and the JavaScript errors can slow things up more effectively than any download. But minor quibbles aside, Board-it.com's a well conceived site. It's not radical, dude, but it works.

Tim Harrison



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Brochures
RESORTS
Resort Guide
Snowreports
Web Cams
Piste Maps
Jobs in the Snow

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GET READY
Board X
Dry-Ski Slopes
Riders Checklist

BOARD X Come and check out what went down at Board X presented by The Daily Telegraph last weekend.

for cool deals call 01858 828068

Cool Deals ~ Wanting some powder? Check out the biggest selection of holiday deals to North America and Europe fron the UK.

The Board-it.com Ultimate Guide ~ Find out about where you've gotta make your tracks this season. Search through over 780 resorts around the globe.

Sign up and WIN! ~ Sign up for the FREE Board-it.com email news services and you could win all the snowboarding gear you'll need this year.

The Photo Gallery ~ Check out our photo gallery, and send your favourite pictures to all your mates! Photos are being continually added.

The Board Room ~ Talk snowboarding. Chat online to other riders in our meeting room.

Take a break when you are tired. Avoid riding at the very end of the day - everyone else is tired or drunk! Sometimes the best part of

cool deals

resort	price	date
Arinsal	£143	19/12
Courchevel	£160	15/12
Kaprun	£186	18/12
Saas Fee	£170	15/12
Les Arcs	£144	15/12
Les Diablerets	£196	15/12
Zell Am See	£166	16/12
Grindelwald	£190	15/12
Mayrhofen	£180	16/12
Val D'Isere	£159	15/12

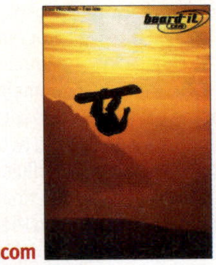
email newsletter
sign up now and WIN!
Your Name
Email Address
go ▸▸

search for a resort
go ▸▸

Board-it.com is packed full of quality information, expert tips, and thousands of holidays – and it's still a doddle to navigate

BOARD-IT SCORES...

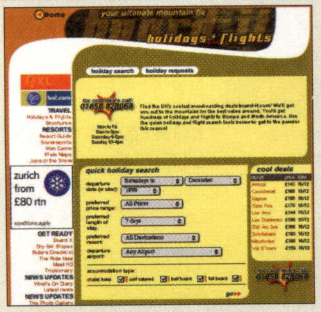
Design	★★★☆☆
Content	★★★★★



NOW BOARDING

Aboutsnowboarding
www.aboutsnowboarding.com
SkiCentral www.skicentral.com
Snowboarding www.snowboarding.com

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

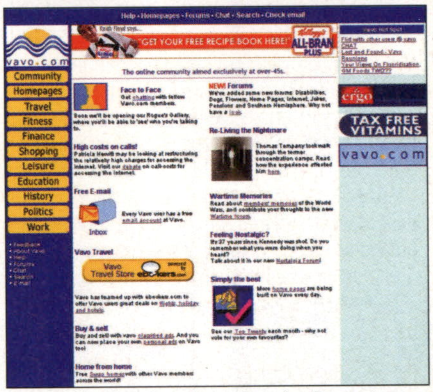


The site is brilliantly simple and easy to use. And this extends to behind the scenes, ensuring speed and flexibility. "The scripts work on a template system," says developer Robert Price. "I design a simple, bare HTML page that encompasses the functions we need, and the designers make them look beautiful. If we need to produce a version of the site for a partner, the designers just copy the template file and redesign it as required." Apart from the occasional bit of tweaking, the developers can concentrate on developing, rather than maintenance. "And because the designers get more control, they're happy too," Price explains.

Vavo

www.vavo.com

If you've been hankering for something a little more mature...



The online community aimed exclusively at over-45s.

Face to Face
NEW! Forums
Re-Living the Nightmare
High costs on calls!
Free E-mail
Wartime Memories
Feeling Nostalgic?
Vavo Travel
Simply the best
Buy & sell
Home from home

Vavo is aimed at a largely neglected online agegroup

Older users of the Net have been almost overlooked by the purveyors of fine Web sites. Vavo's a new site that hopes to redress the balance for this overlooked, but affluent sector of society.

The site is organised into nine sections. The community section has 59 forums, from Woodturning to Phobias, where you can post comments and seek advice. The site also has chatrooms, for more immediate interaction. The Home Pages section helps you build a Web site, or you can take on the Government in the Pressure Groups area.

Health and Fitness lets you search a database of ailments, from the common cold to cancer, and the travel section also has an excellent database searching facility. You can even book a holiday online with E-bookers (**www.ebookers.com**).

You can choose from plenty of financial information, swap houses online, get legal advice, shop, check out cinema and theatre listings, find out about further education and even look at getting back into the workplace (if you're out of it).

Richard Spinks, development manager of Vavo, is no stranger to building online communities. He worked with FortuneCity and was business development director for Lycos Bertlesmann. The idea for the site came when Spinks's father-in-law moved into the family home.

The site took only three weeks to develop. Spinks secured an initial investment of $400,000 for hardware alone. He wanted the site to be accessible to as many visitors as possible. His design mandate was "big, bold, simple and easy to use".

With 58,000 visitors in the first six weeks of going live, Spinks has the confidence of a man who knows he's onto a winner.

Robert Eastham

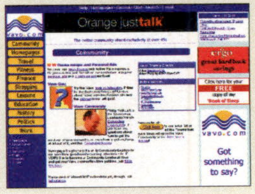
VAVO SCORES...

Design	★★★☆☆
Content	★★★★☆

WISER WEB

Third Age http://home.thirdage.com
I Don't Feel Fifty www.idf50.co.uk
The University of the Third Age
www.u3a.org.uk

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?



The site was built using Microsoft Active Server Pages (ASP) because of their flexibility. With the sheer volume of information on the site, ASP allows quick access to an SQL database containing data like the travel encyclopedia. ASP lets the site offer JavaScript and HTML versions of the live chatrooms. This is particularly handy for people with older browsers. The Vavo site is hosted at Exodus in Boston, which is ironically situated next door to Spinks' former employer, Lycos.

HotBox

www.hotbox.co.uk

Gadgets, games and gizmos for sale

If you're after new, exciting and innovative games and gadgets, look no further than HotBox. The gadget and gizmo market has never been healthier and HotBox is a newcomer. It's working hard to gain a market, offering everything thing from speedboats to shot glass chess sets.

All the products for sale in the 11 categories come complete with picture and brief description. You can check delivery times (two to four days), the prices are competitive, and its all contained within a simple design. That's part of the beauty of the site – given the subject matter, the design isn't too fancy.

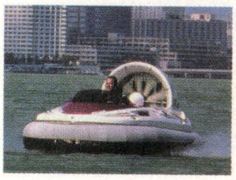
THE SHOT GLASS CHESS SET

The thinking man's drinking game

"The Shot Glass Chess Set is a fantastic idea and a great way to beat chess players that are better than you."
London Evening Standard 3 Dec 1999 - "What the Ab Fab crowd wants"

Hotbox was started two years ago by graduates Michael Smith and Tom Boardman, using a £1,000 loan from their parents. Tom was initially the designer and developer, but both take credit for the site's simplicity. They've now taken on their first employee and are planning to expand with venture capital. Unlike so many Net companies, HotBox is making a profit, so it's attractive to investors. "We believe we can get £15 million on our first round and maybe £4 million on our second," says Smith.

At present, most of the products are found by the two developers. "We find them at trade shows and in magazines, but we've invented some of them ourselves," says Smith. And it's these items, such as the shot glass chess set that give HotBox the edge.



The site's mostly built in HTML and Java, using FrontPage. It's fast to load, easy to read and a pleasure to navigate. The combination of a secure server and Java sort out its online shopping needs.

The addition of some Flash at a later date might help enhance the 'cool, new and exciting feel' behind the products on the site, but it's not essential – the content's enough to get your blood pumping.

James Bavington

HOTBOX SCORES...

Design	★★★☆☆
Content	★★★★☆

REMOTE CONTROL FLYING SAUCER

The ultimate indoor toy

INSPECTING GADGETS

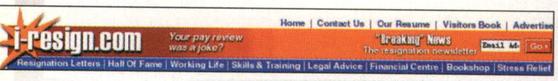
ShopGuide www.shopguide.co.uk
Innovations www.innovations.co.uk
Toys 'R' Us www.toysrus.co.uk

CLICK HERE

I resign! (once I've checked my pay rise)

There's a great collection of funny and tragic resignation letters at I-Resign.com, as well as a useful new service. If you've been promised a pay rise and you're planning what to do with the extra cash, think again. Run it through I-Resign's online tax calculator. Simply key in the gross amount you earn, and the 'taxulator' will tell you what your take-home pay will be.

www.i-resign.com



Home | Contact Us | Our Resume | Visitors Book | Advertise

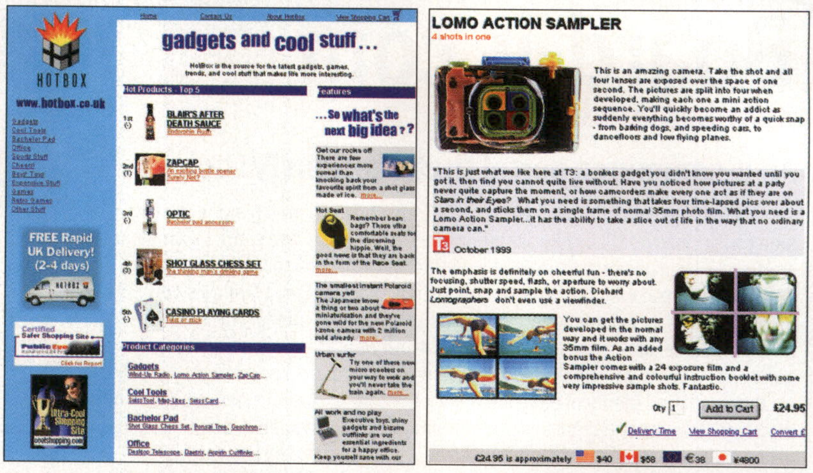
i-resign.com

Your pay review was a joke?

"Breaking" News
The resignation newsletter

Email Ad Go

Resignation Letters | Hall Of Fame | Working Life | Skills & Training | Legal Advice | Financial Centre | Bookshop | Stress Relief



Home | Contact Us | About HotBox | View Shopping Cart

HOTBOX
www.hotbox.co.uk

Gadgets
Cool Tools
Bachelor Pad
Office
Sports Stuff
Cheers!
Boys' Toys
Expensive Stuff
Games
Retro Games
Other Stuff

FREE Rapid UK Delivery! (2-4 days)

Certified Safer Shopping Site
Click for Report

Ultra-Cool Shopping Site
coolshopping.com

gadgets and cool stuff...

HotBox is the source for the latest gadgets, games, trends, and cool stuff that makes life more interesting.

Hot Products - Top 5

1st (-) **BLAIR'S AFTER DEATH SAUCE** Endorphin Rush
2nd (1) **ZAPCAP** An exciting bottle opener Surely Not?
3rd (-) **OPTIC** Bachelor pad accessory
4th (3) **SHOT GLASS CHESS SET** The thinking man's drinking game
5th (-) **CASINO PLAYING CARDS** Twist or stick

Product Categories

Gadgets Wind-Up Radio, Lomo Action Sampler, ZapCap...
Cool Tools SwissTool, Mag-Lites, SwissCard...
Bachelor Pad Shot Glass Chess Set, Bonsai Tree, Geochron...
Office Desktop Telescope, Daetrix, Aspirin Cufflinks...

Features

...So what's the next big idea??

Get our rocks off
There are few experiences more surreal than knocking back your favourite spirit from a shot glass made of ice. more...

Hot Seat
Remember bean bags? Those ultra comfortable seats for the discerning hippie. Well, the good news is that they are back in the form of the Race Seat. more...

The smallest instant Polaroid camera yet!
The Japanese know a thing or two about miniaturisation and they've gone wild for the new Polaroid I-zone camera with 2 million sold already. more...

Urban surfer
Try one of these new micro scooters on your way to work and you'll never take the train again. more...

All work and no play
Executive toys, shiny gadgets and bizarre cufflinks are our essential ingredients for a happy office. Keep yourself sane with our

LOMO ACTION SAMPLER
4 shots in one

This is an amazing camera. Take the shot and all four lenses are exposed over the space of one second. The pictures are split into four when developed, making each one a mini action sequence. You'll quickly become an addict as suddenly everything becomes worthy of a quick snap - from barking dogs, and speeding cars, to dancefloors and low flying planes.

"This is just what we like here at T3: a bonkers gadget you didn't know you wanted until you got it, then find you cannot quite live without. Have you noticed how pictures at a party never quite capture the moment, or how camcorders make every one act as if they are on *Stars in their Eyes*? What you need is something that takes four time-lapsed pics over about a second, and sticks them on a single frame of normal 35mm photo film. What you need is a Lomo Action Sampler...it has the ability to take a slice out of life in the way that no ordinary camera can."

T3 October 1999

The emphasis is definitely on cheerful fun - there's no focusing, shutter speed, flash, or aperture to worry about. Just point, snap and sample the action. Diehard *Lomographers* don't even use a viewfinder.

You can get the pictures developed in the normal way and it works with any 35mm film. As an added bonus the Action Sampler comes with a 24 exposure film and a comprehensive and colourful instruction booklet with some very impressive sample shots. Fantastic.

Qty 1 Add to Cart £24.95

✓ Delivery Time View Shopping Cart Convert £

£24.95 is approximately $40 $58 €38 ¥4800

The clean and clear homepage design on the left is mirrored on the individual product pages (right)

Howletts Online

www.howletts.net

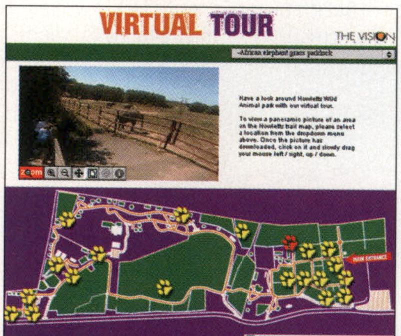
Get up close and personal with endangered species

Using state of the art technology and large quantities of fibre optic cabling, Howletts Online brings the wildlife of John Aspinall's Wild Animal Park to your desktop. You can sit in on feeding time with the gorillas, frolic with the tigers and watch the elephants sauntering around their enclosure.

The time of the site's launch was determined by technology. It's only now there's enough bandwidth available to cope with the demands of a site full of Web cams. "The average modem is five times faster than it was three years ago," explains Ben Sellers, MD of site designers Blueberry (www.blueberry.net).

Howletts Online gives you the chance to get close to endangered species. Six Web cams offer you the best views of the animal action. The cameras can be panned, tilted and zoomed by whoever's logged on, and the animals don't even know you're there.

To help you get the most out of the site, a guide tells you the best times to look in. If you're lucky enough to see an elephant, it's totally captivating and you feel privileged to see these animals close up. For budding David Attenboroughs, it's a brilliant way to observe the animals in real-time.



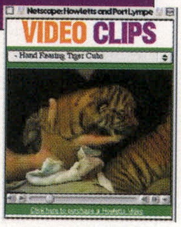
VIRTUAL TOUR

THE VISION

-African elephant grass paddock

Have a look around Howletts Wild Animal park with our virtual tour.

To view a panoramic picture of an area on the Howletts trail map, please select a location from the dropdown menu above. Once the picture has downloaded, click on it and slowly drag your mouse left / right, up / down.



Netscape: Howletts and Port Lympne

VIDEO CLIPS

- Hand Rearing Tiger Cubs

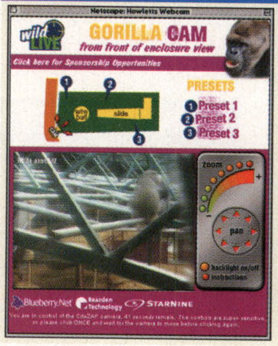
Click here to purchase a Howletts Video

This tech-friendly zoo has video clips and a virtual tour as well as Web cams

The park has a very successful breeding programme and is committed to releasing animals back into the wild. The site reflects this with the diaries of three-year-old Kwam and two-year-old Kwa Kwa, two baby gorillas who they hand reared. They're now the first captive gorillas ever to be released into their natural habitat. Damian Aspinall, son of founder John Aspinall, is justifiably proud of the conditions in which the animals are kept and the park's achievements. "Who knows, in the future we might even have the first Internet gorilla birth live on our Web site," he says.

Katherine Harvey

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?



Netscape: Howletts Webcam

GORILLA CAM
from front of enclosure view

Click here for Sponsorship Opportunities

You are in control of the SiteZAP camera. 41 seconds remain. The controls are super sensitive so please click ONCE and wait for the camera to move before clicking again.

What happens when more than one person's trying to steer a controllable Web cam? The designers at Blueberry came up with a very English solution – queueing. It discovered SiteZAP (www.sitezap.com), a system developed by Rearden Technology in the US, which gives each visitor 120 seconds of control. New punters click on the control panel to join the queue and are told how many people are before them and how long they'll have to wait.

HOWLETTS ONLINE SCORES...

Design	★★★★☆
Content	★★★★☆

SUPER FURRY ANIMALS

AfriCam
www.africam.com
London Zoo
www.londonzoo.co.uk
Longleat Safari Park
www.longleat.co.uk

Global commerce

.com

Money makes the world go around. And now, with the support of the Internet making money in international business can be easier than ever.

With a **.com** web address you can establish a presence in all your target markets for one low cost. Here's how.

.com gets you noticed – internationally

It's the recognised address for international trade – with a **.com** address, you'll break through the barriers between countries and do business around the world. Better still, **.com** is the web address most people try first. So you'll be found quickly and easily by customers all over the world.

.com is now available in the UK

At Network Solutions we've already helped over 6 million companies go **.com** worldwide. Now we've made special arrangements with preferred providers in the UK so you too can enjoy the benefits of **.com** and increase your success online.

Register your .com today

Coin in global success on the web. Call one of our preferred providers below and find out how you can get a **.com** address for less than you think.

NETWORK SOLUTIONS®
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Corpex
Tel: 0171 242 4555
Email: service@corpex.com

Domain Names
Tel: 0191 525 2420
Email: info@DomainNames.com

Easynet Ltd
Tel: 0800 053 4343
Email: sales@easynetltd.com

Entweb
Tel: 0800 525470
Email: sales@entwebuk.com

Internetters Ltd
Tel: 0800 316 3377
Email: sales@internetters-uk.co

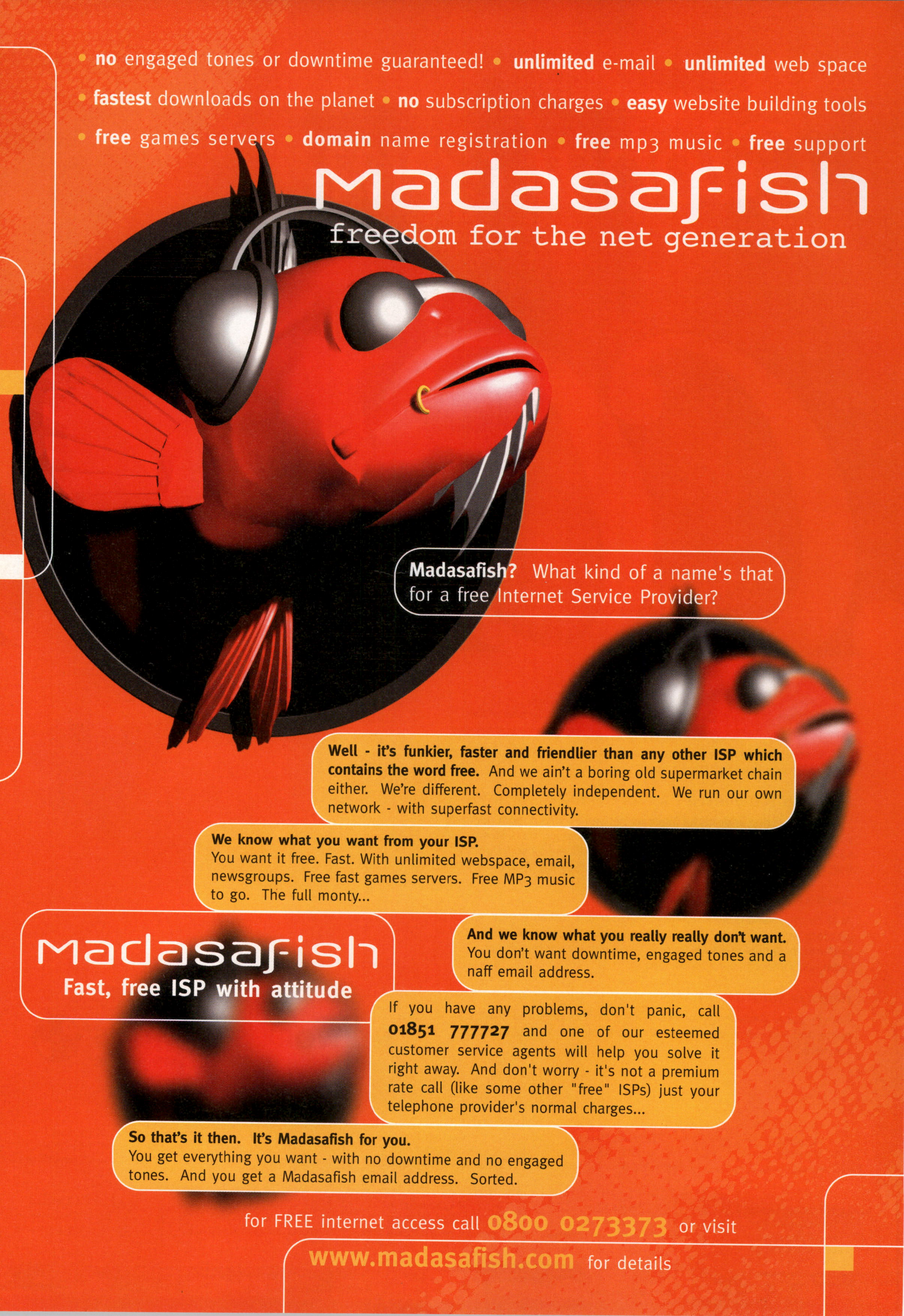
Magic Moments Design Ltd
Tel: 0171 625 2700
Email: domains@
magic-moments.com

Name City
Tel: 0870 751 2021
Email: sales@namecity.com

Netbenefit
Tel: 0800 917 0199
Email: dotcom@netbenefit.com

Planet Online
Tel: 0800 316 2100
Email: sales@planet-ltd.com

U-NET Limited
Tel: 01925 484444
Email: sales@u-net.com



• **no** engaged tones or downtime guaranteed! • **unlimited** e-mail • **unlimited** web space • **fastest** downloads on the planet • **no** subscription charges • **easy** website building tools • **free** games servers • **domain** name registration • **free** mp3 music • **free** support

Madasafish

freedom for the net generation

Madasafish? What kind of a name's that for a free Internet Service Provider?

Well - it's funkier, faster and friendlier than any other ISP which contains the word free. And we ain't a boring old supermarket chain either. We're different. Completely independent. We run our own network - with superfast connectivity.

We know what you want from your ISP.
You want it free. Fast. With unlimited webspace, email, newsgroups. Free fast games servers. Free MP3 music to go. The full monty...

Madasafish
Fast, free ISP with attitude

And we know what you really really don't want.
You don't want downtime, engaged tones and a naff email address.

If you have any problems, don't panic, call **01851 777727** and one of our esteemed customer service agents will help you solve it right away. And don't worry - it's not a premium rate call (like some other "free" ISPs) just your telephone provider's normal charges...

So that's it then. It's Madasafish for you.
You get everything you want - with no downtime and no engaged tones. And you get a Madasafish email address. Sorted.

for FREE internet access call **0800 0273373** or visit **www.madasafish.com** for details

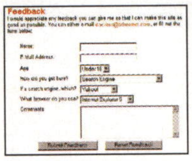
HomeImprovement

Each month **Richard Dinnick** and a team of professional Web designers rate and review readers' home pages. Submit your site to **richardd@internet.emap.com**

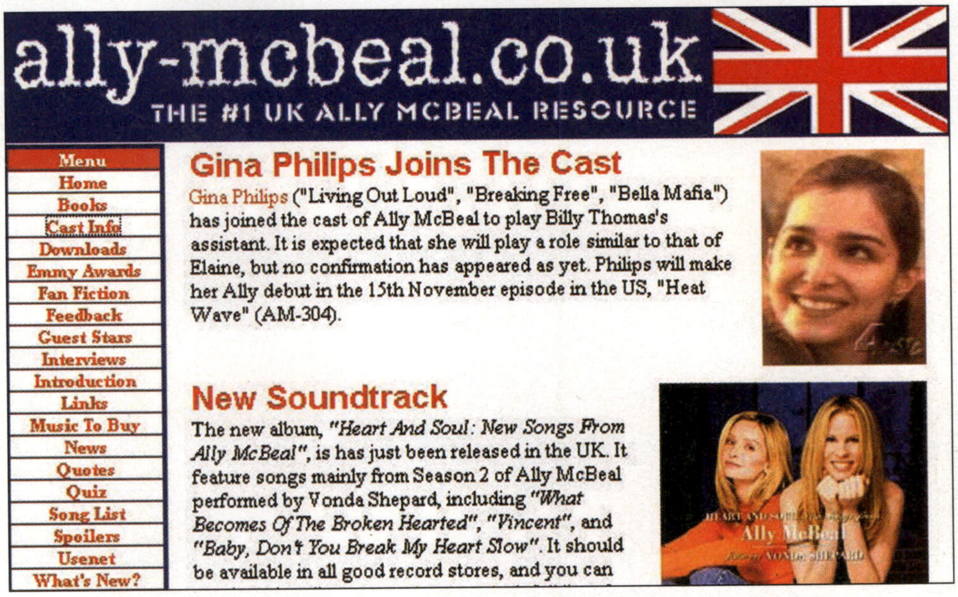
Ally-McBeal.co.uk

This tribute site from Daniel Rees is one of the best personal sites we've seen

FEEDBACK
This site has the best of both worlds – both a feedback form and an email address for visitors.



NAVIGATION
Navigation can be placed in either of the two planes, horizontal or vertical. Most designers use primary navigation on the left. Here, secondary navigation doesn't get much of a look in, except in the Cast Info section, and it's under the main navigation. This is fine, but should be consistent.



Gina Philips Joins The Cast

Gina Philips ("Living Out Loud", "Breaking Free", "Bella Mafia") has joined the cast of Ally McBeal to play Billy Thomas's assistant. It is expected that she will play a role similar to that of Elaine, but no confirmation has appeared as yet. Philips will make her Ally debut in the 15th November episode in the US, "Heat Wave" (AM-304).

New Soundtrack

The new album, *"Heart And Soul: New Songs From Ally McBeal"*, is has just been released in the UK. It feature songs mainly from Season 2 of Ally McBeal performed by Vonda Shepard, including *"What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted"*, *"Vincent"*, and *"Baby, Don't You Break My Heart Slow"*. It should be available in all good record stores, and you can

UNAVAILABLE SECTIONS
On this site, the Book and Quiz sections are 'unavailable'. If your site has sections under construction, hide them from visitors until they're ready to be unveiled.

BROKEN LINKS
Always check to make sure the links from a site work. It can be difficult to keep up, but here a whole section (Music to Buy) has broken links to Amazon.

UNDERLINING LINKS
It's important for visitors to know if a link takes them to another part of the site or a totally different site.

Daniel Rees's tribute site to Ally McBeal should be commended for applying many of the design tips and trade secrets we've printed in Home Improvement. They inspired a redesign of this excellent site and useful accompaniment to the Channel 4 show. As a British tribute to America's favourite fictional attorney, the content's difficult to fault.

The site has 19 sections covering everything about the TV show, from transcripts of interviews with the cast (including one that Daniel conducted himself) to quotes from the programme and downloads, including the infamous dancing baby screensaver. The cast profiles are particularly well researched.

Daniel's listed the 12 regular characters, given them their own pages, and put a concise, but detailed biography on each one, with a list of film and TV credits, as well as contact details. The navigation in this area of the site is excellent, with the inclusion of a secondary level panel. Ally-McBeal.co.uk was put together using Fireworks, Flash and Paint Shop Pro.

Daniel wrote some of his own HTML in Notepad, as well as various other HTML editors, including the excellent Dreamweaver. The tools Daniel's used, and the finished pages, put many professional Web designers to shame.

The site isn't perfect, though. Disappointments include the fan fiction, which is a separate site altogether, and a books section that's under construction. But these are minor quibbles, and the site's attracted around 20,000 visitors since it went live almost a year ago.

Considering Daniel, 15, is studying (or meant to be studying) for his GCSEs, it's amazing he's had the time to put together such a proficient site. But he assures us he only spends about five hours a week tweaking and updating his site.

Perhaps this has something to do with the description Daniel gives of his relationship with the Internet. "It's a bit like sliced bread – you can live without it, but it makes life so much easier," he says. Using a readable size of black text on a white background, with clear, consistent navigation, this is possibly one of the best sites Home Improvement's looked at. It strikes the right balance between focusing on design and content. Alas, this goes against a 'Bealism' – "Who wants to be balanced? Balance is overrated!"

TRADE SECRETS

Richard Dinnick
site reviews editor
Internet Magazine
richardd@internet.emap.com

With the constant press buzz about making millions on the Net, it'd be nice if we could all retire in the next few years having made a packet from the Internet. This site won't do that for Daniel if he doesn't include banner advertising. Many people make enough to cover their ISP charges or their phone bill from selling ad space on home pages. He could easily modify this design could easily be modified to take a standard banner ad in much the same way as the *Internet Magazine* site does. The site can take free ads to make the site look popular, then start charging as traffic increases. With the sort of target audience Ally McBeal attracts, Daniel could be onto a winner.

SITE SPEC

www.ally-mcbeal.co.uk

CREATED BY
Daniel Rees

LAUNCH DATE
February 1999

CURRENT SIZE
Approximately 1Mb

DEVELOPMENT TIME
Two days or a week

NUMBER OF PAGES
40

MOTIVATION
"I wanted to combine my interests in computing and Web design with my favourite television programme, and provide a resource for people who wanted to learn more about Ally McBeal. I was frustrated at how little information there was on the Internet at the time."

WHAT NEXT?
Looking for advertisers or sponsors, and planning more content.

ALLY-MCBEAL.CO.UK SCORES...

Design	★★★★☆
Content	★★★☆☆

DANIEL RECOMMENDS

HBO: Sopranos
www.hbo.com/sopranos
Rugby World Cup
www.rwc99.com
Skinz.Org
www.skinz.org

D.I.Y. DOMAIN REGISTRATION

Less than
£14.95
A YEAR FOR UK DOMAINS
(excl VAT)

Just visit www.domainsnet.com
and it's as easy as 1–2–3

1. FREE SEARCH – CHECK YOUR NAME IS STILL AVAILABLE ☑

2. SET UP YOUR FREE E-MAIL AND WEB FORWARDING ☑

3. BUY ONLINE, SECURELY ☑

Er… that's it! Your new, professional looking e-mail & web site addresses are up and running!

THE EASIEST, FASTEST AND MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO REGISTER YOUR INTERNET NAME – WITH NO STRINGS ☑

WE PAY YOUR UK REGISTRY FEES FOR YOU! So your UK domains cost just £14.95 A YEAR OR LESS (excl VAT)! We're also offering discounted US registry fees. Check out www.domainsnet.com for more details.

DomainsNet

DomainsNet is based in the UK but is an international service, so you'll find that all prices in the site are expressed in US Dollars – though you can pay in Sterling.

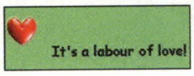
Jooly's Joint – MS Web Pals

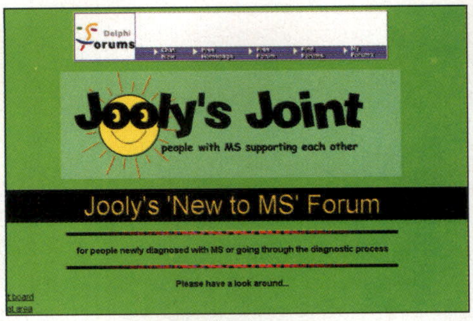
Julie Howell's excellent help site on MS is for sufferers and carers alike

ALT TAGS
If you want to know how to use ALT tags correctly, and to maximum effect, this site's a good example to check out. The tags perfectly describe the images and act as an indication of which sections they link to.

Jooly's Joint
people with MS supporting each other

LOGO
The animated sun on this site is a strong logo. It's used throughout the site, appearing at the top of every page. The idea is extended to the smaller bullet point suns in the section listings. The overall effect gives the site a strong brand identity and personality.


It's a labour of love!

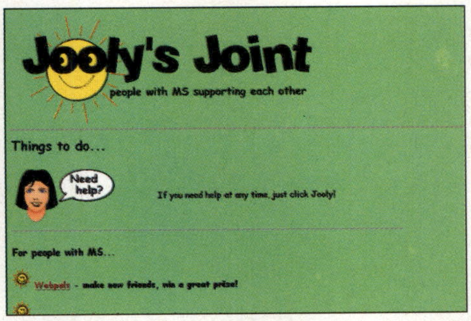


Jooly's Joint
people with MS supporting each other

Jooly's 'New to MS' Forum

for people newly diagnosed with MS or going through the diagnostic process

Please have a look around...

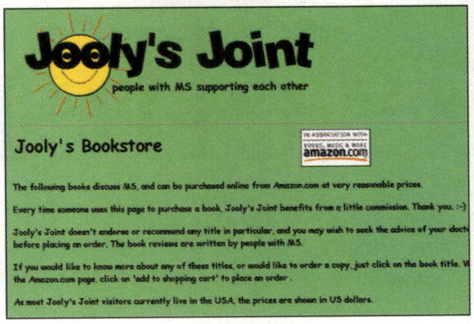

Jooly's Joint
people with MS supporting each other

Things to do...

If you need help at any time, just click Jooly!

For people with MS...

Webpals - make new friends, win a great prize!


Jooly's Joint
people with MS supporting each other

Jooly's Bookstore

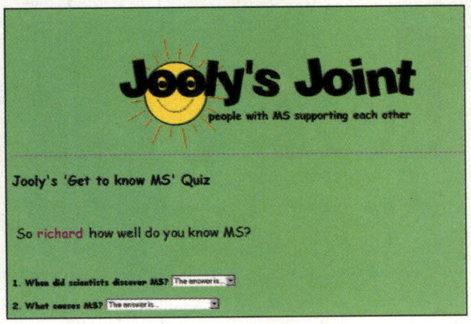
The following books discuss MS, and can be purchased online from Amazon.com at very reasonable prices.

Every time someone uses this page to purchase a book, Jooly's Joint benefits from a little commission. Thank you. :-)

Jooly's Joint doesn't endorse or recommend any title in particular, and you may wish to seek the advice of your doct before placing an order. The book reviews are written by people with MS.

If you would like to know more about any of these titles, or would like to order a copy, just click on the book title. W the Amazon.com page, click on 'add to shopping cart' to place an order .

As most Jooly's Joint visitors currently live in the USA, the prices are shown in US dollars.


Jooly's Joint
people with MS supporting each other

Jooly's 'Get to know MS' Quiz

So richard how well do you know MS?

1. When did scientists discover MS? The answer is...
2. What causes MS? The answer is...

SELF HELP
When it comes to a choice of background colours and fonts, this site offers help you might normally find in a magazine or book about the Net: "Jooly's Joint is designed with the needs of people with MS in mind. These pages should be legible and accessible to you. If you don't like green(!) or if you simply cannot read the screen because of the colour scheme, you can set your own colours by changing the settings in your browser." There's even a cartoon Julie to help you through the process.

Julie Howell must be one of the few people to have a .org domain name for her personal home page. But there's a good reason for that. Julie's site – Jooly's Joint – is one of the Web's top resources about the crippling disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS). The .org domain flags up the site's charitable status, and it really is an excellent portal and site for anyone suffering from the disease or caring for those who do. When she isn't maintaining Jooly's Joint, Julie is a campaigns officer (for access to digital information) at the Royal National Institute for the Blind (www.rnib.org.uk). So she knows almost every trick in the book for making her site accessible to those with poor eyesight.

TRADE SECRETS

Margaret Manning
commercial director
Reading Room
www.readingroom.net

This is a terrific site. It manages, through its use of colours, graphics and fonts, to achieve a real feeling of community, shared experience and unobtrusive support. Navigation through the site relies heavily on hitting the Back button. This is common for sites that grow rapidly. New content pages are added in a linear fashion, leaving the site looking cluttered and disjointed. There comes a point when it's best to take stock. Look at the content that's on the site and plan a structure that will develop as the site develops. Plan a hierarchy. The main headings for your site become the top-level navigation. This is similar to the chapter headings of a book. These headings should ideally be presented on each page of the site so users can always navigate forward.

As the site will tell you, MS is a debilitating disease that can strike without warning. It can cause paralysis, deafness as well as blindness and is ultimately a killer. Access to anything, whether it's a building or a Web site, is an important part of ensuring MS sufferers can continue as 'normal' a life as possible. Julie's site bears testament to the bravery of MS sufferers across the globe – particularly in the Short Stories and positive Poems section.

The site is split into three sections –; one for people suffering from MS, one for carers and families of sufferers, and one for everyone. The first includes chatrooms, support boards (forums), thorny issues, legal perspectives and general help for kids, gay MS sufferers, parents, workers and people newly-diagnosed with MS.

The families and carers section has an information exchange and a careers club, while the final section offers a variety of links and content, from a bookshop and themed mall to general help. The site was originally put together using plain HTML, although for ease Julie now uses HotMetal Pro. Julie's partner created the animated GIFs that populate the site.

Web designers, amateur and professional, could learn a lot from what Julie has achieved using simple but effective techniques. It's a strategy that has earned the site over 120,000 visitors. Julie was inspired to create the site by her experience of Usenet. "I learnt more about MS in five days on Usenet than in the previous five years," the 28 year old tells me. The idea for the site was a bit of a Eureka! experience. "I dreamed up the idea when I was having a bath" Julie says. "I got out, dried off, set it up and it went live two hours later. Within 30 minutes someone had signed up. The rest is history."

Many people have stumbled across the site thinking that its name, 'MS Web pals' meant it had something to do with Microsoft. "Microsoft Web pals," Julie comments, "yeah, right." The other part of the name, Jooly's Joint, also foxes quite a few visitors. "Most people think it just means Julie's Place," she says. "It does, but the fact that marijuana is thought to control pain in people with MS might also have something to do with it! It's an in joke between people with MS. But I still get the odd visitor who thinks MS means Microsoft."

SITE SPEC

www.mswebpals.org

CREATED BY
Julie Howell

LAUNCH DATE
August 1995

CURRENT SIZE
7Mb

DEVELOPMENT TIME
"Initially, about two hours! But over the past four years the site has changed beyond recognition. I spend around 20 hours a week maintaining the site."

NUMBER OF PAGES
100

MOTIVATION
"In 1995 there was very little on the Web for people with multiple sclerosis. I wondered if the idea of a community for people with MS had potential – today the service has more than 10,000 members."

WHAT NEXT?
Stronger links with the MS Societies of the world and official sources of health information would be good. The Amazon bookstore has been popular (I sell books on MS) so a store selling disability-friendly products is an attractive idea.

JOOLY'S JOINT – MS WEB PALS SCORES...

Design ★★★☆☆
Content ★★★★☆

JULIE RECOMMENDS

Lastminute.com
www.lastminute.com
Freemoney
www.freemoney.fm
SuperStats.com
www.superstats.com

fortuneteller

www.o-pinion.com

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The Teddy Bear's Very Own Home Page

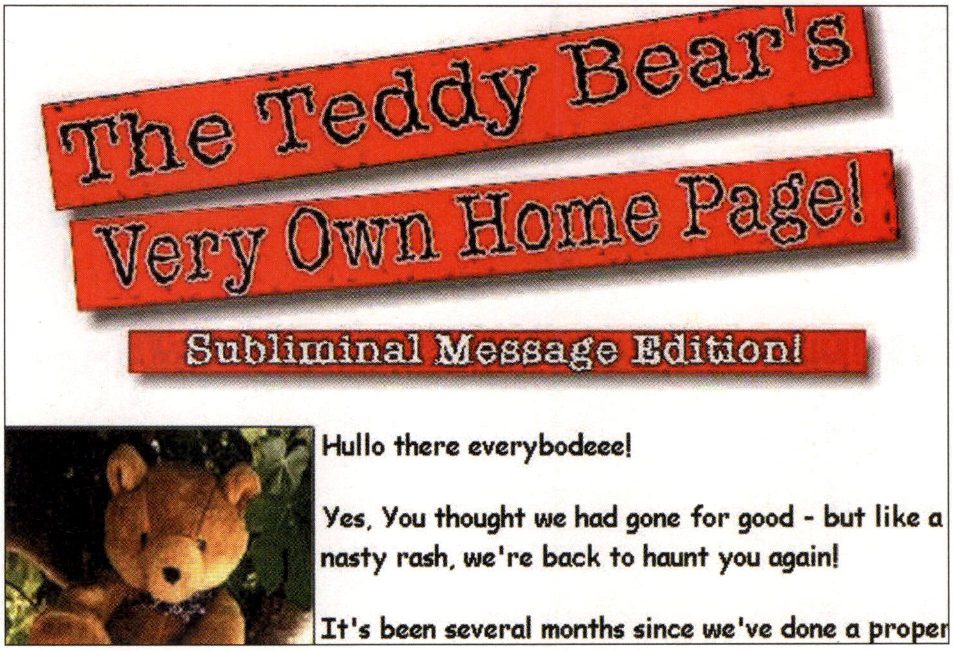
David Calvert has designed an entertaining site dedicated to his favourite cuddly toys

Download size
As a rule, a standard Web page should not be larger than 60kb. At 73.2kb, the main page is a little hefty. Visitors won't want to hang around for it to download.

Browser compatibility
The point of having a Web site is to let people see it. Some designers choose to specify which browsers you should use. But never make David's mistake of telling visitors "Tough titty if you ain't got it".

Cash For Correspondence

Main banner
Don't use large banners to flag up the site's sections – they delay downloading. Instead, create small icons and repeat them across the site. Not only is it good for building brand identity, but visitors only have to download them once.



The Teddy Bear's Very Own Home Page!

Subliminal Message Edition!

Hullo there everybodeee!

Yes, You thought we had gone for good - but like a nasty rash, we're back to haunt you again!

It's been several months since we've done a proper

Counters
Counters are crucial for tracking a site's success. But, just like 'under construction' signs, counters have gone out of fashion. Hide them.

001321

Fonts
Fonts intended to give a site personality have to be chosen carefully. Comic Sans works well on this site, since it's trying to give the impression that a teddy bear has written the site content.

Heh! heh!

ALT tags
David's used ALT tags for comedy value. Don't do it. For a talking Web browser or someone with the images option turned off, they'll be meaningless.

David Calvert says he's been working on the character of Lucy Bear (a brown stuffed animal with a taste for fine wine) for a year. His ultimate aim is to get the idea made into a TV programme, and he regards a Web site as the perfect way to introduce Lucy Bear and her friends to the world.

If he wants to use his Web site to promote his Lucy Bear idea, the 35 year old might do well to place his pages with a more reliable host. We had difficulty looking at the site due to problems with the current host, LineOne. And for promotional purposes, David should definitely buy a suitable domain name and get it registered on all the search engines. At the moment, the site's URL isn't the easiest to remember – or type.

The format of The Teddy Bear's Very Own Homepage is an online newsletter with a new edition posted every few months. The style of writing is very personal and will appeal to children or adults well-versed in irony... "In this hi-tech issue," Lucy Bear writes, "we go to France to taste some stuff called wine." The font Comic Sans is used to give the impression that Lucy is writing it herself and there are even some deliberate phonetic spelling mistakes.

Divided into seven sections, the site offers advice on how to bath a teddy bear, an agony bear section where visitors can write in with their problems, and a guest book. The Cash For Correspondence section is good, too. David – in the guise of Lucy Bear – has sent a fiver to some top politicians and celebrities asking for two things – what they'll do with money and if they'll send a signed photo. Former PM, John Major, and Virgin boss, Richard Branson, simply returned the money minus autograph, while current PM, Tony Blair and Harrods boss Mohamed Al Fayed both send the bear their pictures. At a time when many Web sites seem to just farm other people's content, this is a real breath of originality.

Although the site's strengths are in content, rather than design, there are still problems. Calvert needs to work out who his audience is. Parts of the text are offensive, so it can't be children. If it's an adult audience he's after, the tone should be adjusted accordingly. And if he wants to reach as big an audience as possible, saying it's "Tough titty" if you don't use IE won't help. It was a bit lazy not to test his site using Netscape, let alone Opera. There are more unhelpful remarks on the site, particularly in the alternative text for images.

Overall, the unique nature of the site means it has plenty of potential. David is already selling photographs of the bears on the site, which is great to see. He should also think about introducing more content to make the site sticky. It would be great to have the site updated on a daily basis, but David can't spare the time. So he should consider the addition of bulletin boards which will encourage users to contribute the site, and simple interactive games to bring people back on repeat visits.

Steve Hill

TRADE SECRETS

Matt Groves
Managing Director
64K
www.64k.co.uk

For a strong Web site design, picking a theme or motif is important. David could base the site's navigation around an amusing teddy bear illustration, maybe in a Manga style. If this is beyond him, it's always a good idea to try advertising for an illustrator at local art colleges. As the quality of the home page is usually the difference between a site visitor staying or leaving, I'd down cut down on the text and make more of the strongest parts. It was constructed using Microsoft FrontPage 4.0 (www.microsoft.com/uk) which is a real design no-no. It takes over and it doesn't give you much flexibility about how you design your site. David should learn to write HTML first and then get a Web authoring package like Dreamweaver (www.macromedia.com) which will allow him to adjust the code himself.

SITE SPEC

http://website.lineone.net/~teddy-bear

CREATED BY
David Calvert

LAUNCH DATE
August 1998

CURRENT SIZE
835kb

DEVELOPMENT TIME
2-3 months

NUMBER OF PAGES
25

MOTIVATION
"I thought it was important that I learned how the Net worked and I wanted to tell the world about my interests and express my opinions. I have also been developing the concept of Lucy Bear for a while and I wanted to introduce her to the world."

WHAT NEXT?
"If the popularity of the site continues, I'll be increasing the amount of merchandising and will register a domain name."

THE TEDDY BEAR'S VERY OWN HOME PAGE SCORES...

Design ★★☆☆☆
Content ★★★★☆

DAVID RECOMMENDS

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The Death Clock
www.deathclock.com
World Society for the Protection of Animals
www.wspa.org.uk

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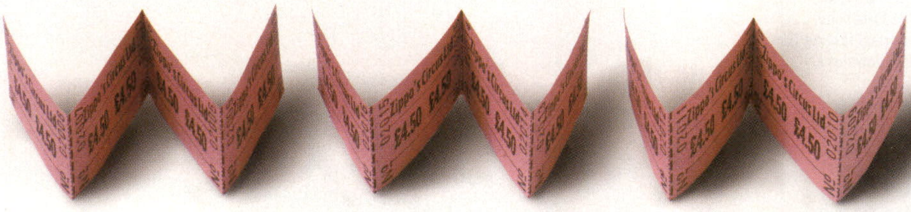

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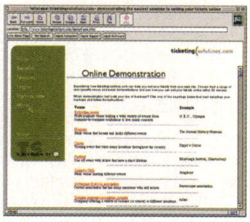

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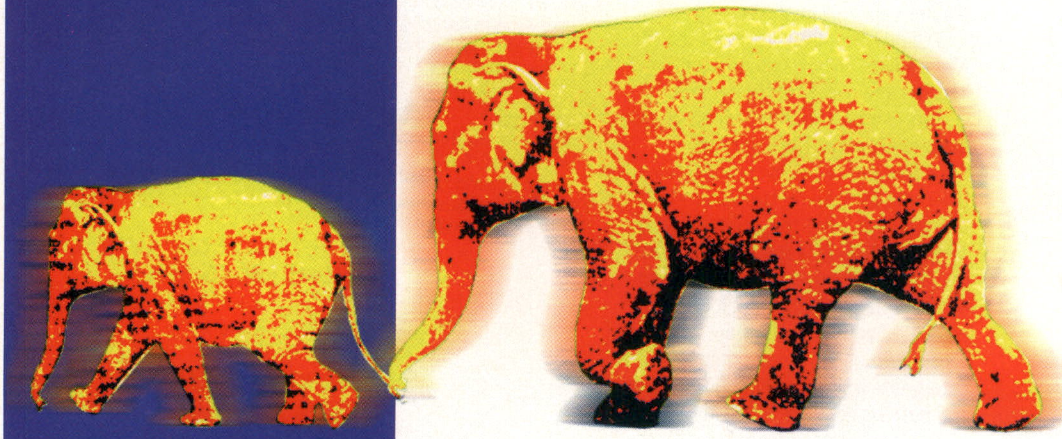

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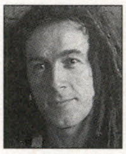
Your questions answered

If you've got a Net problem, email it to us and we'll field it to our distinguished panel of experts. From Web design to legal advice, we can answer your questions. We'll also be picking the best reader's tip and question to win prizes each month, so get them rolling in

Readers' questions are answered by our panel of experts. Send your query to faq@internet .emap.com

Richard Baguley is our associate editor. He'll answer your technical questions on everything from relational databases to digital signatures.



Mike Slocombe has designed sites for clients that include *TFI Friday*, Virgin Radio, the BBC and NCR. He also produces Urban 75, an irreverent online magazine. Mike will answer all your Web design queries.

Roger Gann is a freelance computer journalist. If you're having trouble with dial-up networking or your 56K modem isn't talking to your ISP, he's your man.

Michael Chissick is the head of Internet and IT law at Field Fisher Waterhouse. He'll be ruling on your legal problems.

Susan Costello is development director at Rufus Leonard, a brand and communications consultancy responsible for Web sites for Lloyds TSB, Royal Mail, and BT. She'll answer your technical Web site queries.

Andrew Starling is our technology editor. He'll deal with site creation and telecoms queries.

We regret that we cannot answer any queries other than those printed in the magazine.

Are two IEs better than one?

Q Is it possible to run both IE3 and IE5 on a Windows 95 machine? I want to test backward compatibility, but whenever I run IE3, it corrupts IE5. I then can't use 'Find on this page' in IE5 (or in Outlook Express), and some JavaScripts won't work. The only recovery I've found is to use Repair Internet Explorer from Add/ Remove Programs in my Control Panel, but this takes ages and resets some personalised settings (such as file associations in Explorer). How soon do you think we'll be able to forget about backward compatibility (or at least draw the line at fourth generation browsers).

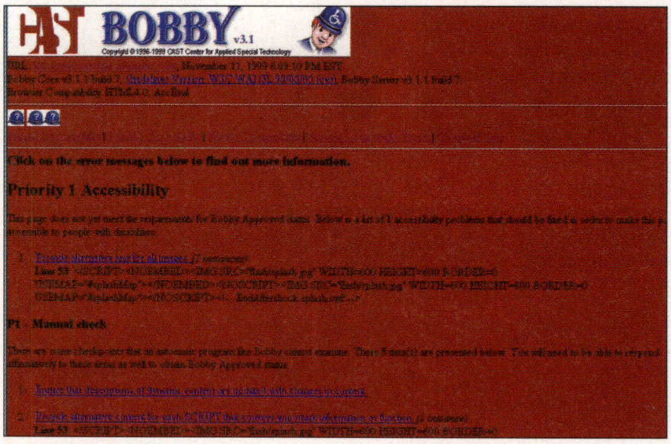
George Dillon

George.dillon@cwcom.net

A Richard Baguley replies: Unfortunately, you can't run these versions of IE side by side. So you have two choices – run two separate bootable partitions, or use an HTML checker. For the first option, you'd have to divide your hard disk into two sections, install Windows on both of them and then install IE5 on one and IE3 on the other. This isn't an easy solution, but a program like PowerQuest's BootMagic (at **www.powerquest .com/bootmagic**) will help.

The other option is to use an HTML validator, which are often built into Web design programs, like Macromedia's Dreamweaver (**www.dreamweaver.com**). You could also use a standalone product, like CSE HTML Validator (**www.htmlvalidator.com**), as well as software that'll check your pages over the Web, such as NetMechanic (**www.netmechanic .com**) or Bobby (**www.cast.org /bobby**). All these programs will tell you which versions of IE are required to look at your pages and they can suggest ways to make them work on older browsers.

I don't think you can ever forget about backward compatibility, George – people will always use older browsers. And don't forget systems like WebTV, which use a simple Web browser that's different to both IE and Navigator.



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Click on the error messages below to find out more information.

Priority 1 Accessibility

P1 - Manual check

HTML validators such as Bobby can be used to check which versions of popular Web browsers your site visitors will need

Web rings

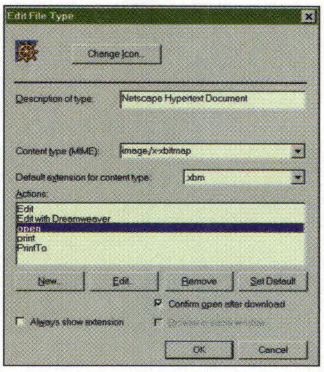
Q I'm developing a jewellery site with over 2,000 items. I've placed all the items on the site to represent a window shopping effect. I'd like to add a Microsoft Access database so my customers, using a series of drop down menus, can specify the items they'd like to see. Using FrontPage, I know I can place an SQL Access database on my Web site, but would I (or my customers) need a copy of Access installed on to my (or their) server for this database to work?

South Africa Jewellery

sajewellery@callnetuk.com

A Richard Baguley replies: FrontPage can connect to a database in a number of ways – it can connect to any SQL server or read a Microsoft Access file direct. But the latter will only work if you use a Web server that understands Microsoft's ASP (Active Server Pages) language. If it does, all you have to do is import the database into FrontPage, create the links to the database using the Database Import wizard, and the server will do the rest. If the database changes, you simply copy the Access file onto the server. You won't need to have a copy of Access running on the server, and your customers won't need it either. The Web server uses the scripts on the Web page.

I'd recommend you look at a more sophisticated system, though. You could probably save yourself an awful lot of work in the long term by investing in a system that can handle database and e-commerce tasks. There are plenty of systems that'll integrate tasks such as extracting your list of products and prices from a database and allowing customers to create a shopping cart. These are easier to administer if you're planning to let your visitors buy products from your site. Have a look at systems like the Microsoft's Site Server Commerce edition (**www.microsoft.com/siteserver/commerce**), INTERSHOP enfinity (**www.intershop.co.uk**) or Actinic Catalog (**www.actinic.co.uk**). There are also companies who'll run this software for you, such as Commerce NTI (**www. commercenet.co.uk**) or Corpex (**www.corpex.com**). All you need to do is input the details of your products.



Description of type: Netscape Hypertext Document
Content type (MIME): image/x-xbitmap
Default extension for content type: .xbm
Actions:
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Edit with Dreamweaver
open
print
PrintTo
☑ Confirm open after download
☐ Always show extension
☐ Browse in same window

Editing File Associations is a bit easier than constructing your average sub-atomic particle accelerator

Opera lover

Q I want to use Opera as my default browser, but Netscape hijacks the .htm file association. How can I stop it?

Dave Wilcox

altcom@dial.pipex.com

A Andrew Starling replies: File Association settings are hidden away in a weird place on Windows 9x. You can find them by opening the My Computer window on your desktop, selecting Options from View in this window, and choosing File Types from the index folders. That's the easy bit. Now you have to double-click on the file type you want to change, and when the Edit File Type window appears, you double-click on Open in the Actions box. You can now browse around your system to find the .exe program that you want to use to open that kind of file.

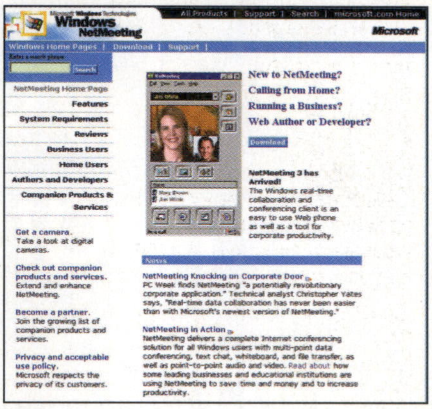
Merry Christmas and kia ora

Q After you reviewed NetMeeting (September 1999) I bought two Logitech Quick Cams – one for me and one for my parents in New Zealand as a Christmas present. We're still hoping to 'see' each other on Christmas Day and share two New Year's Eves for the Millennium. But despite trawling through www.microsoft.com/netmeeting and www.netmeet.net, I've failed to get started. Both sites assume you know how to use the Microsoft Internet Directory. But I don't know my parent's address and the address book isn't like a Yellow Pages that you can scroll through. There seems to be no way of finding out how to use it to contact friends online. My friends without a Web cam should be able to see and hear me, even if I can only hear them.

Your article made it look so exciting. Please can you highlight a few more pointers for us newbies?

Richard Baugh

rsbaugh@aol.com



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PC Week finds NetMeeting "a potentially revolutionary corporate application." Technical analyst Christopher Yates says, "Real-time data collaboration has never been easier than with Microsoft's newest version of NetMeeting."

NetMeeting in Action
NetMeeting delivers a complete Internet conferencing solution for all Windows users with multi-point data conferencing, text chat, whiteboard, and file transfer, as well as point-to-point audio and video. Read about how some leading businesses and educational institutions are using NetMeeting to save time and money and to increase productivity.

NetMeeting is a great videoconferencing product that's yet to hit the big time

A Richard Baguley replies: You're almost there Richard. You've correctly realised that you need to find each other before you can connect. There are two ways of doing this – using a Microsoft Internet Locator Service (ILS) server or emailing your IP address.

ILS is like a telephone book – you look up a name and it gives you the IP address to connect to. But there isn't one phone book – there are hundreds. In order to find each other, you and your parents need to connect to the same ILS server to find each other. There's no shortage of ILS servers – see **www.netmeet.net/bestservers.asp** for a list. Find one that looks suitable and email your parents with the address. Tell them to connect to your chosen ILS server when they launch NetMeeting – you do this in the Options window on the Tools menu. Now tell them to click on the Calling tab and enter the name of the ILS server you've selected in the Server Name box. You should do the same, and connect to the ILS server, where they should be able to find you in the list of users.

The second way is more simple – you both arrange to go online at a particular time to find out your IP address. This can be found in the Start menu, by going to Run and typing winipcfg. This program gives you the details of your connection, including your IP address. Once you've found this, email it to your parents and tell them to enter it into the Address field of the New Call dialog box in NetMeeting. If you're

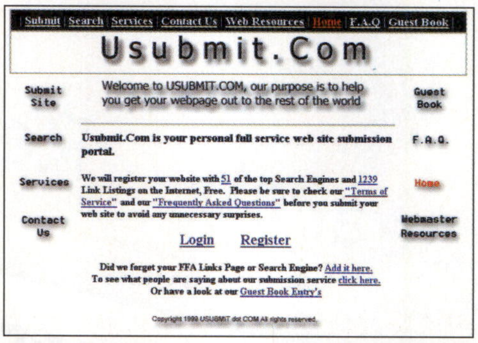
Top reader's tip wins £200 voucher

A Your otherwise useful article on How to come top in search rankings (November 1999) neglected to mention that many search engines give higher rankings to recently submitted sites, which is why regular re-submission is necessary to avoid moving down the rankings. But don't submit your site too often or you could be excluded for spamming.

Most of the automated submission services mentioned in the article charge a fee. But there are some useful free services at **www.thewebmasters.bc.ca**, **www.uk2net.com** and at the Netscape centre, which now hosts the Web Site Garage service at **http://websitegarage.netscape.com**. The site at **http://members.tripod.com/deburr/submit.htm** also provides some HTML that lets you offer a multi-submission service on your own pages. And at **www.submitexpress.com** you'll find a free META tag generator which creates customised code that you can copy and paste.

Pete Farman

pf@westward.nildram.co.uk



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Or have a look at our Guest Book Entry's

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There are many free search engine submission services on the Web. All you need to do for most of them is register and deal with the email you'll receive as a result

There's some useful URLs there, Pete. Another one to add might be www.selfpromotion.com. We don't recommend automatic submission services if you're trying to promote a professional site, but if you can't afford the time to submit it manually, it's better to use the automatics than nothing at all.

Pete wins himself a £200 shopping spree at top audio-visual online shopping Web site Unbeatable. With over 2,500 products available for your perusal and purchase, it's the place to find everything from a roll of film to a widescreen telly. Backed by mail order specialists, Capital Sound & Vision, all orders are despatched by first class post or next day courier.

www.unbeatable.co.uk

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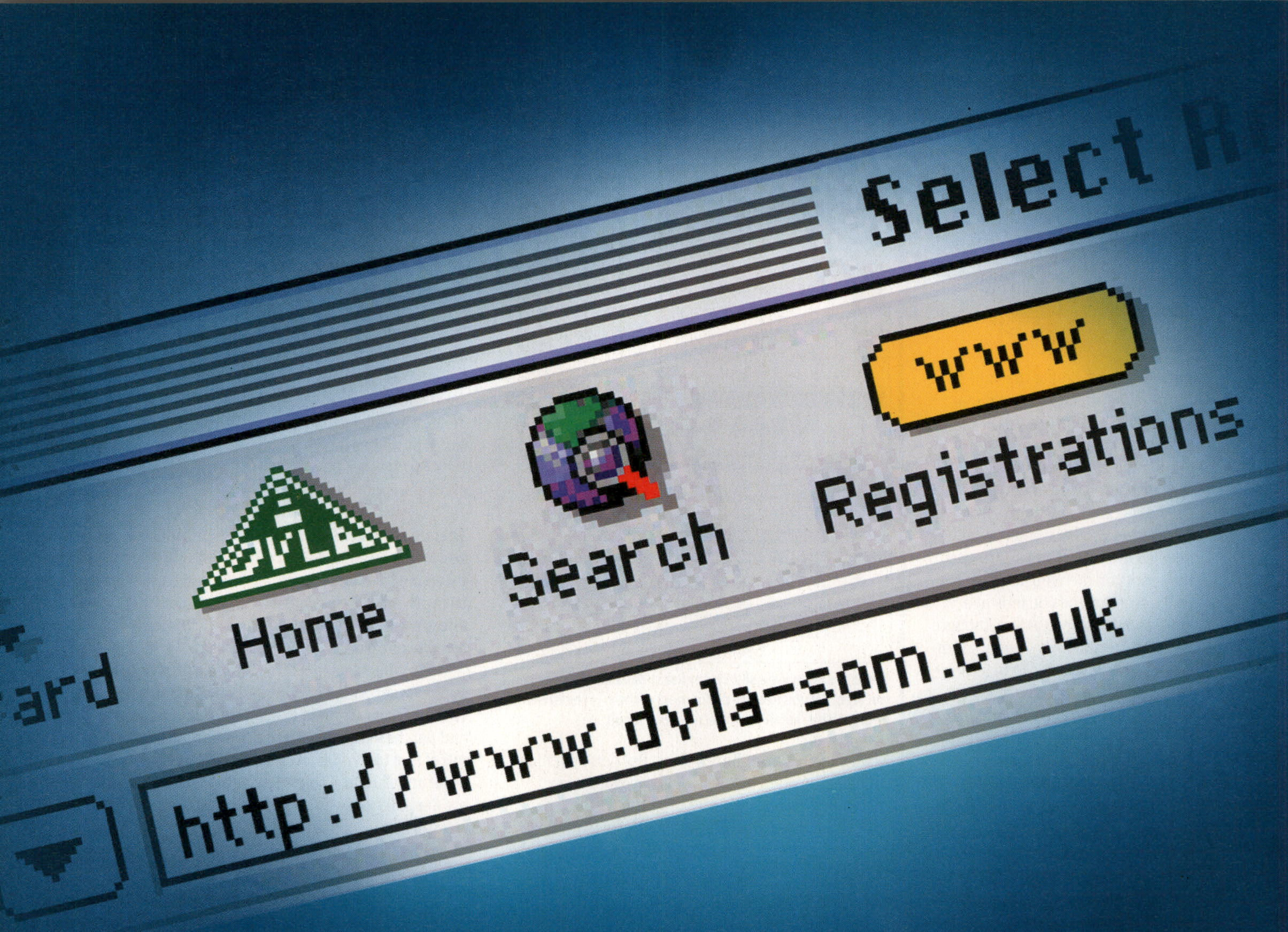

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Design: Spiral Communications, Leeds

using a dialup connection, you'll need to stay online, otherwise your IP address could change.

ASPoser

Q I'm using an ASP file as the home page of my site – it has a 'Search the site' facility on it. Will search engines look at my ASP home page? If not, the only solution I can see is to have the search.asp file as a frame within a pure HTML parent. This means using a frame, which I'm trying to avoid.

Charles Tracy
charles@tracy.demon.co.uk

A **Susan Costello replies:** A 'Search the site' facility on your home page shouldn't stop search engines finding your home page, even though it's an .asp page. Some search engines don't index URLs that contain questions marks, such as **www.mysite.co.uk/index.asp? search='somesearch string**, as these pages require an input parameter to dynamically create the page, and it's impractical for a search engine to generate user input parameters. As long as this isn't the case, you should be okay.

But don't get complacent – search engines vary enormously in the way they index pages, and are always improving their facilities to cope with the expanding number of sites on the Internet. The key is to make your site as accessible to as many search engines as possible. Make sure you've used META tags, <title> tags, keywords in the text on the home page and <alt> tags on images. Also, avoid frames and register your site with the main directory sites, such as Yahoo!. Also, it never hurts to add a straight HTML and text page to your Web site with information about the site. This can serve the dual purpose of being the default page for visitors who can't or won't cope with frames, graphics or JavaScript.

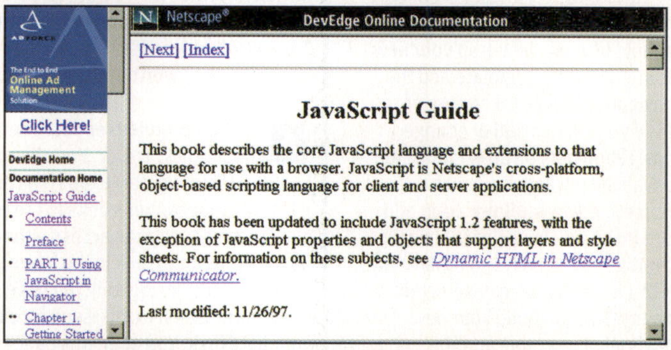
I'm getting shudders

Q I've got some great JavaScript from Dynamic Drive (http://dynamicdrive.com). I'd like to use page transition, where the screen splits from the middle outwards to reveal the next page. It works, but when the new page is fully visible, the screen 'shudders' then settles down. The following goes in the head of the page:

```
<!—Special Effects upon page
enter Script- (c) Dynamic
Drive (<http://www
.dynamicdrive.com>www
.dynamicdrive.com) For full
source code, installation
instructions, 100's more
DHTML Scripts, and Terms
Of Use, visit dynamicdrive
.com—><META http-equiv="
Page-Enter"CONTENT=
"RevealTrans(Duration=4,Tr
ansition=14)">
```

The actual JavaScript is held in a separate file. Unfortunately, Dynamic Drive doesn't supply an email address for queries. Do you have any idea why the page might shudder like that? Is that just a quirk of JavaScript?

Chris
chris@bizservices.demon.co.uk



JavaScript Guide

This book describes the core JavaScript language and extensions to that language for use with a browser. JavaScript is Netscape's cross-platform, object-based scripting language for client and server applications.

This book has been updated to include JavaScript 1.2 features, with the exception of JavaScript properties and objects that support layers and style sheets. For information on these subjects, see *Dynamic HTML in Netscape Communicator.*

Last modified: 11/26/97.

For a thorough introduction to JavaScript, visit http://developer.netscape.com/docs/manuals/communicator/jsguide4/index.htm

A **Andrew Starling replies:** The splitting screen transition isn't anything to do with JavaScript – it's all down to the META tag and the RevealTrans function. This is a special META function and it doesn't work on Netscape browsers or old IE browsers.

It seems you've also included some JavaScript on the same page, which could be responsible for the page judder. It's easy to get a page to shake using JavaScript. Here's some sample code:

```
function shake() {
        for (k = 35; k > 0; k—)
{               self.moveBy
(k,0);
                self.moveBy
(-k,0);
}
}
```

You need to call this JavaScript function by including onClick="shake()" within a normal <a> hyperlink tag.

If you look through the JavaScript code and find selfmoveBy, or something similar, you'll know that's where your judder's coming from.

If you can find time to read the entire guide, you'll become a genuine JavaScript guru.

Is big brother watching me?

Q I've been using a Web site to buy CDs, and I've noticed the site has become more personal. After I'd bought the latest Chemical Brothers CD, I started seeing a lot more messages for similar music. Is the site collecting information about me and logging what I buy? What are my rights? Can I ask to see my file under the Data Protection Act? It's a UK site.

Charles Thompson
zedfritter@freebeeb.com

A **Michael Chissick replies:** The site might be taking a cookie generated by your browsing – it's a computer data storage programme which records your activities from your hard drive. Cookies are not illegal and most browsers will let you set a preference to tell you that a cookie is going to be taken.

If the site is in the UK or in the European Union, the company which operates the site will need to be registered under the 1984 Data Protection Act, or its equivalent. Under this Act, you can write to the site's owner and see a copy of any file that the company holds on you, for no more than £10. A new, Data Protection Act comes into force on 1 March 2000.

Online with your mobile

Q I have a normal home PC and I want to go on the Net through a mobile phone. If this is possible, what hard or software will I need?

Rod Stephen
GCCAF1_Stephen@banff-buchan.ac.uk

A **Roger Gann replies:** You can do this, Rod, but given the cost and general inconvenience involved, I'd recommend installing a normal phone line – you'll find it a lot cheaper, easier and faster. At present, GSM phones are limited to connect speeds of 9.6kbps and the call charges are horrendous. Aside from that, most GSM mobiles are designed to connect to notebooks with PC Card adaptors, which are conspicuously lacking in most desktop PCs. Your mobile must support data and be compliant with PC Card makers – the Nokia 6110 is a good example. But PC Card adaptors aren't cheap – prices start at around £130. Some recent Ericsson phones can connect using infra-red, and many motherboards have cheap (around £10) plug-in IR transceivers, so you might be able to connect in this way. Using your mobile to send and receive email is more viable, though expensive, but I wouldn't recommend trying to browse the Web this way.

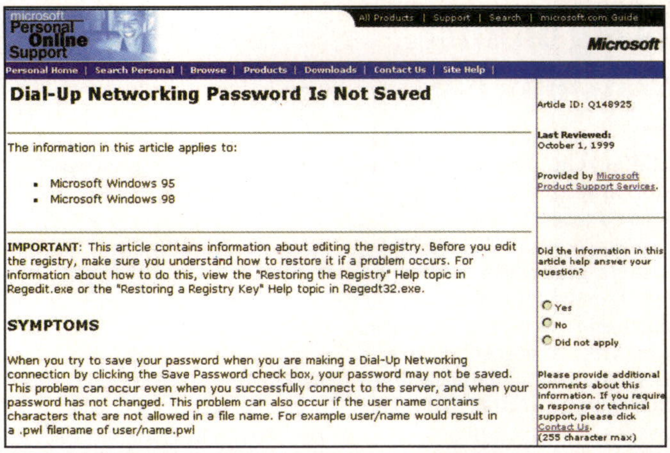
No Password Retention

Q My problem is how to save my password and automatic dial-up by double-clicking on a desktop icon. I'm running Outlook Express 5 with Windows 95, and despite opting to save these settings, neither have worked. I've tried all the obvious solutions and made sure my system's correctly set up in Accounts, Connections and Dial Up. I've even deleted, renamed and re-entered my .pwl settings in the password files in Windows, but the problem persists. I've also downloaded patches from the Microsoft Web site and installed and uninstalled Outlook Express and dial-up details several times. I know my computer can save the password and automatic dial-up as it was doing so until quite recently. Can you help me?

Geoff Horner
geoff@ffolliott.screaming.net

A **Roger Gann replies:** Dialling automatically is easy – you simply open the Dial-up Networking folder, click Connections, Settings and uncheck the 'Prompt for information before dialling' box. Password retention is less simple. As you know, there could be many reasons why your password isn't being saved, such as:

- Your password list (.pwl) file is damaged
- The rna.pwl file (if it exists) is damaged
- Password cacheing is disabled
- Automatic logon is enabled
- One or more of the dial-up



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Dial-Up Networking Password Is Not Saved

Article ID: Q148925

Last Reviewed: October 1, 1999

Provided by Microsoft Product Support Services.

The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Windows 95
- Microsoft Windows 98

IMPORTANT: This article contains information about editing the registry. Before you edit the registry, make sure you understand how to restore it if a problem occurs. For information about how to do this, view the "Restoring the Registry" Help topic in Regedit.exe or the "Restoring a Registry Key" Help topic in Regedt32.exe.

SYMPTOMS

When you try to save your password when you are making a Dial-Up Networking connection by clicking the Save Password check box, your password may not be saved. This problem can occur even when you successfully connect to the server, and when your password has not changed. This problem can also occur if the user name contains characters that are not allowed in a file name. For example user/name would result in a .pwl filename of user/name.pwl

Did the information in this article help answer your question?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Did not apply

Please provide additional comments about this information. If you require a response or technical support, please click Contact Us.
(255 character max)

Password retention failure can be tricky to fix. At least the Microsoft site gets you off to a good start

- networking files is missing or damaged
- User profiles are disabled, but the Profiles List key is present in the Registry

Microsoft has a KnowledgeBase article (**http://support.microsoft.com/search**) that details the various fixes. It comes down to whether or not your password cache is running. If it's not, you'll have to enter passwords individually – after all, the whole point of security is to ask for passwords. The big question is whether you want to logon to Windows 9x when it first loads. If you don't, Windows 9x won't know who you are or which Password List (pwl) file to use. You should log off from the Start/Shutdown menu and make sure you enter a user name and password.

Alternatives to frames

Q As an enthusiastic, though slightly challenged Web designer, I'd like to ask how to avoid using frames. Can you suggest ways of adding navigation to a site without frames, so each time content changes, you don't need to trawl through pages to amend the navigation coding?
A. Plummer
FusionDgn@aol.com

A Mike Slocombe replies: Good navigation should be logical, consistent and intuitive, listing all the main sections of a site, as well as offering related pages to encourage visitors to keep browsing through your site. Sub sections should be clearly marked on the navigation bar so that at any time the user knows where they are in relation to the whole site.

Setting up a navigation system can be time-consuming at first, but by using a series of templates, each one listing all the main components of the site with changing secondary menus for sub sections, updates should be easy. Just drop your new content into the template and the navigation will be taken care of.

If you wish to add or change navigation bars on an existing site, advanced packages such as HomeSite (**www.allaire.com**) and Dreamweaver (**www.dreamweaver.com**) let you search and replace the HTML on every page or selected pages. You can build your new navigation in a table and the programs will automatically position it at the top of every page.

My PC's a dinosaur

Q I still own a 486 with Windows 3.1. I've considered upgrading to Windows 95, but everyone tells me it'll fall over and die, and I can't afford the grand to upgrade to a newer model. I've upgraded the RAM to 32Mb, the hard disk to 2Gb, and added a CD-ROM and a 56K modem (neither of the latter two work, though).

My problem is none of the ISPs seem to support 3.1 users – or if they do, it's not obvious. Do you know of any? What browser should I use (I upgraded to IE4, but it didn't like it and now I can't get any Net access) and how do I change my modem set up? Please help, I can't afford to upgrade to a newer model.
Kathy Briggs, London
KATHY.A.BRIGGS@flemings.com

A Roger Gann replies: There's nothing wrong with Windows 3.1, Kathy. If it works, why change it? Most ISPs use Internet Explorer, but it only supports Windows 9x, Windows NT 4 and MacOS. I don't know any ISPs that supply Windows 3.1 versions of Internet Explorer that can automatically install and configure the dialer and the email client for you. The best I can suggest is to find a friend who will install the ISP's Windows 9x software on their machine.

Once installed, make a note of all the config details, including:

- The ISP's phone number
- Your user name
- Your password
- The TCP/IP settings, such as DNS server addresses and proxy servers, if any
- Your email address (plus email login details if they're different to your user name)
- Email POP3 and SMTP server name details
- Newsgroup server name details

Then, and this is the boring bit, you can enter these details into the Internet Dialler and the email and newsgroup clients on your PC. You can download IE4.01 and IE5 for Windows 3.1 from the Microsoft Web site (**www.microsoft.com**

»

Top question wins a pager and Mini-Mail service

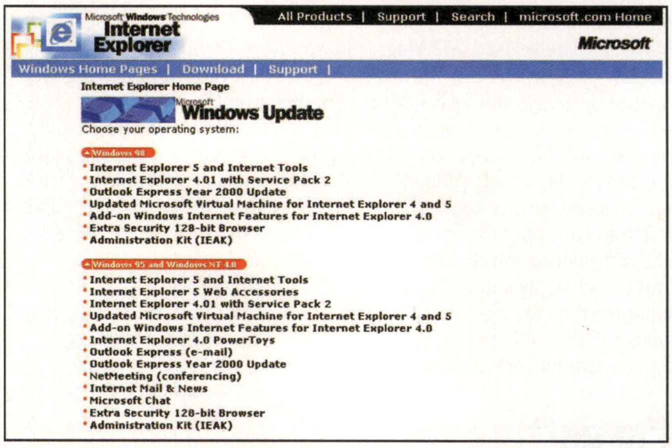
How can I get the best of both worlds?

FX
NEC
MINIcall

Q I've installed Freeserve & Bun.com on my computer and I've configured the dial-up connection to let me select from the drop down menu between the two ISPs. The problem I'm having is I can't get each ISP to go to its own home page without a lot of messing about changing the settings each time. In the General tab under Internet Properties, if I select 'Use default' it comes up with 'Bun', no matter which ISP I've set as default under connections. Is there a way to set it up as I want, or am I attempting the impossible?
Trevor Hollingworth
trevor@hollingworth98.freeserve.co.uk

A Richard Baguley replies: There's a way to get what you want with a simple click, Trevor. You change the default home page for Internet Explorer (or Navigator) to an HTML file on your local disk. If you create an HTML file that contains links to the home pages for Bun.com and Freeserve, you can access either page by simply clicking on the appropriate link in the home page.

You do this by creating the page (using any HTML editor or text editor – see the labs test in this issue for a few suggestions) and saving this to your hard disk. You open this page in IE by selecting Open from the File menu, clicking on Browse and locating the file on your hard disk. Once your file's opened, select Internet Options from the Tools menu and click on the Use current button in the Home Page section. Now, every time you open Explorer, it should open your Web page and you can go to whichever home page you want by clicking on the link.



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- Updated Microsoft Virtual Machine for Internet Explorer 4 and 5
- Add-on Windows Internet Features for Internet Explorer 4.0
- Extra Security 128-bit Browser
- Administration Kit (IEAK)

Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0
- Internet Explorer 5 and Internet Tools
- Internet Explorer 5 Web Accessories
- Internet Explorer 4.01 with Service Pack 2
- Updated Microsoft Virtual Machine for Internet Explorer 4 and 5
- Add-on Windows Internet Features for Internet Explorer 4.0
- Internet Explorer 4.0 PowerToys
- Outlook Express (e-mail)
- Outlook Express Year 2000 Update
- NetMeeting (conferencing)
- Internet Mail & News
- Microsoft Chat
- Extra Security 128-bit Browser
- Administration Kit (IEAK)

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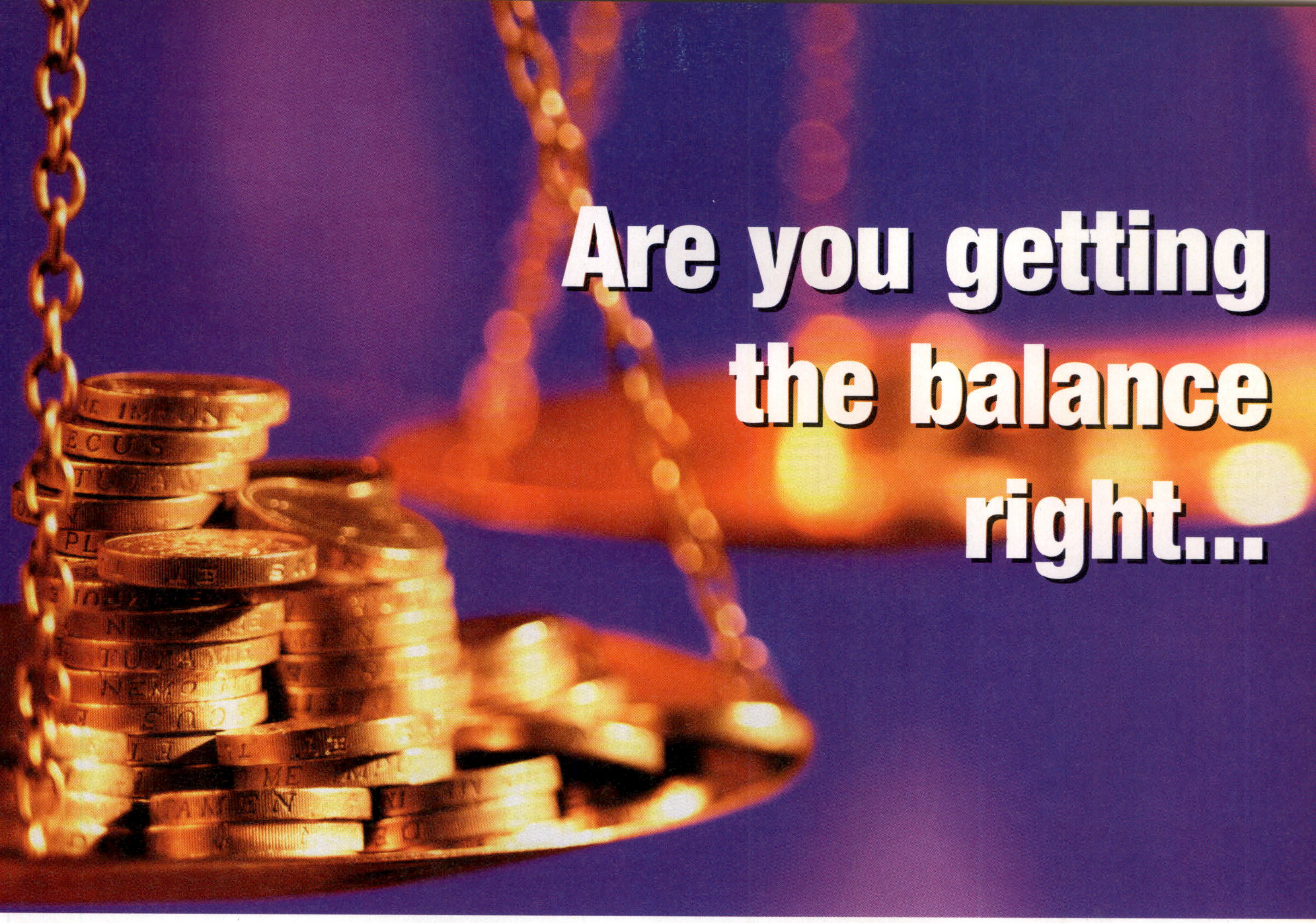

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/windows/ie/download/windows.htm), and Netscape Navigator is also available for Windows 3.1.

What are you looking at?

I'm new to Web design, but I've volunteered to create a site for work. How do you create menu buttons that change appearance when they're selected? I've set up a frame at the bottom of the page, with GIFs representing menu options, and I want to show people which section they're looking at. Do I need to use animated GIFs for this, and if so, which packages would you recommend? I'm using Adobe PageMill to construct the site, with Photoshop and Illustrator for the graphical links.
Rob Park
Robert.Park@foggo.com

Susan Costello replies: You could either load a different GIF into the bottom frame for each section of the site or use JavaScript to switch GIFs when the button's clicked.

The first method involves loading a different frameset page when each button's clicked (remember to target_top). If you split the navigation GIF in the bottom frame into different buttons and only change the active page button, you'll benefit from cached images (and you won't be negating the need for frames).

It's more complicated if you want to use client-side scripting (JavaScript) – you'll have to get into the HTML code, rather than using PageMill. That said, it means another page doesn't have to be retrieved from the server, making the GIF change quicker. Remember, this script works for Netscape 3 and above and IE4 and above. im

Expert Helpline

Unfortunately, we don't have the space to answer all your queries, and sometimes you want a faster answer. Why not try our recommended helpline service? It comes at a premium price, but we think it's worth it.

Calls are charged at £1.50 a minute and you shouldn't be on the phone for more than five minutes. There's even a no quibble, money back guarantee in case you're not satisfied. Just let us know, and we'll make sure you get a refund.

The helpline deals with dial-up and browser queries, but it can't answer questions about corporate network connections.

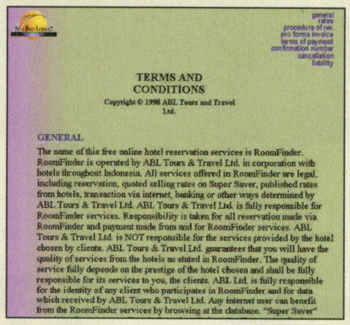
(09064) 664 460
8am-11pm, seven days a week

Legal brief: Terms and conditions

As an online retailer, you need to think carefully about how to draft and display your terms and conditions. Michael Chissick tells you how to protect yourself and inform your customers at the same time

E-commerce is turning retailing on its head. The electronic shop window designed to entice customers is also the means of delivering the retailer's terms and conditions of trading. But the job of making your site visually attractive and legal isn't easy.

Under English law, an online retailer must make some reasonable effort to inform the customer about the existence of its terms and conditions. These will not form part of the contract unless they're brought to the attention of the customer before the contract's made. For more onerous conditions, such as seeking to deprive the customer of legal rights or impose tough penalties, English law demands an even greater effort on the part of the retailer to give notice to its customers. Tucking away draconian clauses in a more obscure part of the site or putting them in small print might seem like a good idea, but the clauses won't be legally binding.



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GENERAL

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Not putting your terms and conditions on your Web site could cause big problems

The most attractive means of displaying terms and conditions (in that it avoids large blocks of legalese) would be to put a statement on the bottom of the order form which says "This contract is subject to the company's standard terms and conditions". But this'd probably fail the notice requirement. A customer might not see your statement and, even if they do, there's no access to the terms, so you can't claim your customers have agreed to them.

A better option is to have the statement linked to a page containing your terms and conditions. This is popular with many retailers because it achieves some legal credibility without disrupting the promotional aspects of the site or the order form. This method probably satisfies the notice requirement for 'usual' terms. But it'd be unlikely to appease the courts with more onerous terms. For such terms, an online retailer would be better advised to take the terms off the 'legal page' and onto the order form itself.

Probably the best method from a legal view is to create a dialog box that forces visitors to scroll through the terms and conditions before clicking on a link that says "I agree to these terms". But this could be off-putting, particularly when they're only purchasing low value goods like CDs. A compromise is to make first-time customers perform the 'scroll and click' process and assume that repeat customers are already aware of the terms and conditions. Under English law, previous dealings can bind a customer to terms and conditions even if they're not presented with the terms and conditions on each and every occasion.

Ultimately, it's a commercial decision as to how extensive you make the terms and conditions and how to display them on your site without dissuading potential customers by making the purchase a long-winded and tedious exercise. Perhaps the best indicator is the reasonable expectation of customers in relation to the value of goods being sold. You wouldn't expect to be presented with a two-page contract before you buy a newspaper at your local shop, but you'd expect some written documentation (and to read it carefully) before you buy a car.

Michael Chissick is head of the Internet and On-Line Law Group at City law firm Field Fisher Waterhouse. He can be contacted at mpc@ffwlaw.com

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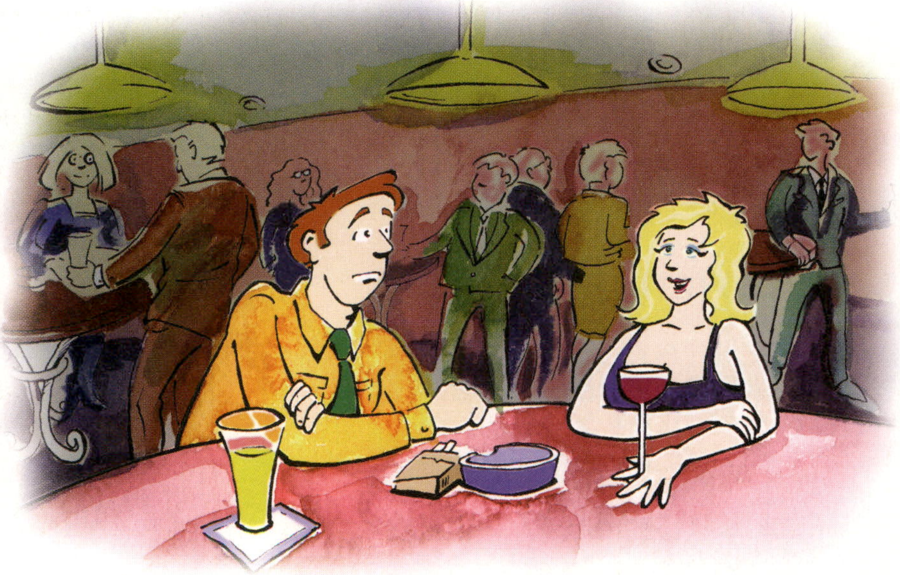

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How to stay safe from viruses

There's no shortage of people trying to inflict damage on your system via email or the Internet. But don't panic. Steve Patient tells you how to stay virus-free online and improve the security of your computer

There are plenty of horror stories about email and Web-based computer viruses, but there's no reason why you should become a victim. There are plenty of other reasons for data loss and problems with your computer, such as thunderstorms, power cuts, phone problems, software bugs, hardware failures and user error. But viruses get far more press coverage because they're the sinister creations of malicious humans.

A lot of the press hype is generated by people who either know nothing about viruses, or have a vested interest in making them sound more dangerous than they are. In practice, it's easy to protect yourself against attack.

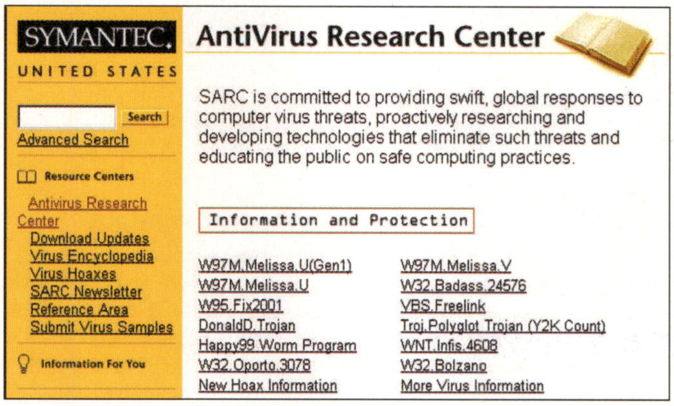
But first, a warning about False Authority Syndrome. If a colleague tells the office they've had to re-install Windows after getting a virus from the Web, they become the office security expert. But the people who take precautions against viruses are never asked for advice. Listen to people who don't have virus problems – not those who do.

Get related articles from faxback page 149

A virus history

A good anti-virus program is still your best defence against attack, but they're not perfect. In March 1999, Richard Pethia, director of Carnegie Mellon University's CERT Coordination Center (which monitors computer risks), said anti-virus products still couldn't detect a Microsoft Word macro virus four years after it first appeared. There are historical reasons for this.

Anti-virus programs began by using an analytical approach to detection called profiling, which used behaviour rules to detect virus activity. This approach was superseded by signature checking. Signatures are unique strings of bytes in a virus. When there weren't many viruses, signatures provided a fast way to check for them. Few false alarms occurred since there were few signatures.



SARC is committed to providing swift, global responses to computer virus threats, proactively researching and developing technologies that eliminate such threats and educating the public on safe computing practices.

Every anti-virus vendor provides updates to its software. Since anti-virus technology relies on signatures instead of good operating system design, you need to keep your version current

As virus writers became more sophisticated, they introduced encrypted and polymorphic viruses that changed their appearance. They've become harder to detect using signatures, and you get more false alarms.

As a result, signature checking has become too slow and too expensive to maintain. Some anti-virus companies have given up.

Another disadvantage of signature checking, as noted by Pethia, is that you can only scan for a virus after you've been attacked by it. The appearance of macro viruses highlighted this problem. Emailed documents and the Net let a macro virus spread around the world in hours rather than days – far faster than anti-virus software can be updated. Even worse, it's

What's a virus?

A virus is a program capable of installing and propagating itself secretly. It does this by hitching a ride on a harmless program or hiding in the boot sector or partition table of a disk. It can also deliver a payload when a condition it's designed to detect is met.

Program viruses run on specific hardware platforms and under specific operating systems. Most of these are aimed at PCs running DOS with a few written for Windows and Macs. They can lurk on disks of all kinds, attach themselves to programs, and hide in their memory.

There are around 30,000 program viruses. You can read endless descriptions on any anti-virus vendor site. But only a few hundred efficient viruses are out in the wild.

Macro viruses

Macro viruses are more successful than program viruses. The first, called WMConcept, appeared in 1995. At the time of writing there are over 1,800 macro viruses.

All macro viruses are written in the high-level macro language used to automate documents. The most successful are targeted at Microsoft, though Lotus Office apps suffer as well.

Macro viruses run automatically when you open an infected document. Existing documents are infected and other actions can be carried out without your knowledge.

The ability to convert documents and the macros they contain between different versions of applications, coupled with the ability to merge macros, means that – unlike traditional program viruses – they tend to mutate.

Vandals

Vandals are similar to viruses and macro viruses, but they don't replicate. A vandal can be emailed toyou, or visiting a boobytrapped Web page can provide a vandal with access.

Vandals can be programs, macros and cross-platform auto-run software technologies used on Web pages, including Java, ActiveX, JavaScript, DHTML and Web push technologies.

Programs such as Back Orifice or the more recent and more unpredictable Evil – the first wild ActiveX vandal – are designed to let someone elsewhere to control your computer.

Vandal programs can monitor for passwords, send porn emails from you to your local police station or even buy something online. They can also compromise your secret encryption keys, allowing a stranger to prove he or she is you.

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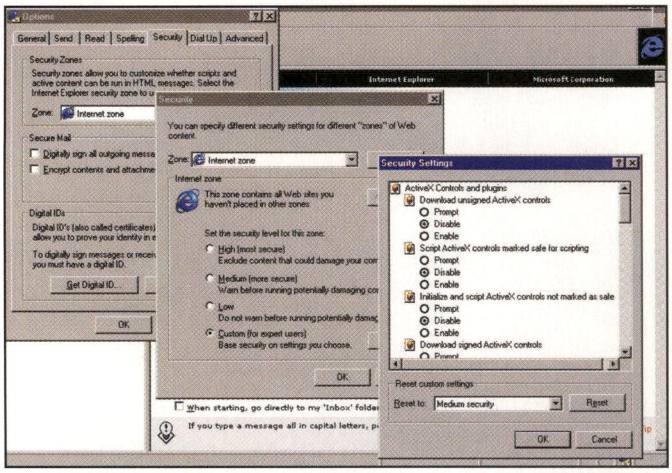

Options
General
Send
Read
Spelling
Security
Dial Up
Advanced
Internet Explorer
Microsoft Corporation

Security Zones
Security zones allow you to customize whether scripts and active content can be run in HTML messages. Select the Internet Explorer security zone to u
Zone: Internet zone

Secure Mail
☐ Digitally sign all outgoing messa
☐ Encrypt contents and attachme

Digital IDs
Digital ID's (also called certificates) allow you to prove your identity in e
To digitally sign messages or recei you must have a digital ID.
Get Digital ID...

Security
You can specify different security settings for different "zones" of Web content.
Zone: Internet zone
Internet zone
This zone contains all Web sites you haven't placed in other zones
Set the security level for this zone:
○ High (most secure)
Exclude content that could damage your con
○ Medium (more secure)
Warn before running potentially damaging co
○ Low
Do not warn before running potentially damag
● Custom (for expert users)
Base security on settings you choose.

☐ When starting, go directly to my 'Inbox' folde
If you type a message all in capital letters, p

Security Settings
ActiveX Controls and plugins
Download unsigned ActiveX controls
○ Prompt
● Disable
○ Enable
Script ActiveX controls marked safe for scripting
○ Prompt
● Disable
○ Enable
Initialize and script ActiveX controls not marked as safe
○ Prompt
● Disable
○ Enable
Download signed ActiveX controls
○ Prompt
Reset custom settings
Reset to: Medium security
Reset
OK
Cancel

To prevent trouble with Web page based vandal software, IE4 users should turn off support for ActiveX, Java and push technology

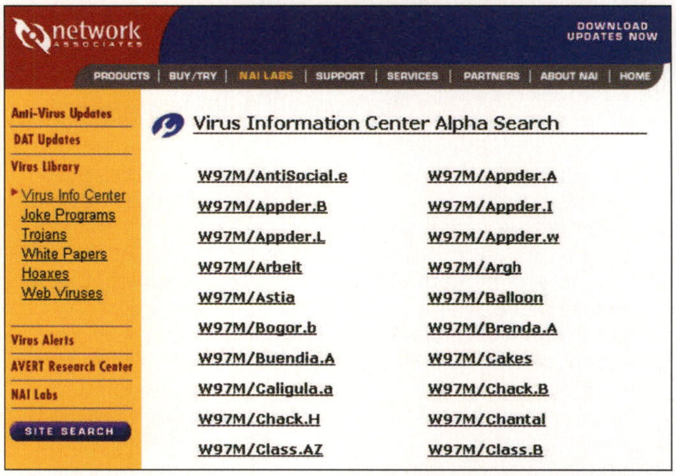
A virus-free life

The best way to protect yourself against viruses is to use a more secure operating system. Windows NT is an option, but it still leaves you open to macro viruses and vandals as you'll probably still use Office and Internet Explorer.

Macs are less affected, particularly if you don't use Microsoft software. But if you change to Linux or BeOS, you can forget about most virus problems if you configure them properly. If this isn't an option, you have to work hard for your security.

First, install a good anti-virus package, one that also protects against macro viruses and vandals. The best option on the market seems to be eSafe. It uses profiling as well as signatures for virus protection. It also uses sandbox technology for auto-running Web content. The sandbox uses a set of rules to determine what downloaded programs and scripts can and can't do. Up to date anti-virus software is better than none at all.

On it's own though, we don't think it goes far enough. You should also refuse to accept any emailed attachments in formats that can carry viruses or vandals. Even more important, you should change your Web browser to one which doesn't support insecure Web technologies or turn off all support for them in whatever browser you choose to use.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PARTNERS
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White Papers
Hoaxes
Web Viruses
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SITE SEARCH

Virus Information Center Alpha Search

W97M/AntiSocial.e
W97M/Appder.B
W97M/Appder.L
W97M/Arbeit
W97M/Astia
W97M/Bogor.b
W97M/Buendia.A
W97M/Caligula.a
W97M/Chack.H
W97M/Class.AZ
W97M/Appder.A
W97M/Appder.I
W97M/Appder.w
W97M/Argh
W97M/Balloon
W97M/Brenda.A
W97M/Cakes
W97M/Chack.B
W97M/Chantal
W97M/Class.B

Most of the anti-virus vendors maintain virus description lists. Read a few of these to see just what can happen to your system if you don't protect it

simple to write a new macro virus. Anyone can do it. Combine this with a homogeneous, deliberately insecure software environment, and signature based anti-virus software can't give you complete protection.

Why are you so vulnerable?

The majority of viruses attack Microsoft DOS and Windows systems, while most macro viruses target Microsoft Office. The majority of vandals attack Windows systems. Do you see a pattern?

DOS was never intended to be secure. Windows – apart from Windows NT – has no security, and Office is designed to allow free distribution of macros and executable code. There's no built-in security model for ActiveX, which is really an executable program. This can be an advantage in a secure environment, such as a business with a private network.

But ActiveX is a time bomb on the Net. Microsoft has introduced its Trust Model, which means 'please trust ActiveX'. In practice, anyone can get any ActiveX program signed – but this doesn't mean it's safe.

After Evil (written in ActiveX) appeared, Microsoft released a patch that warns you about ActiveX controls on Web pages and gives you the opportunity to disable them – but it doesn't offer a means to determine whether or not an ActiveX control is dangerous. You can only find out by running it. This is the computer equivalent of Russian roulette.

Bloomin' vandals

Anti-virus vendors can put in detectors for vandal software, such as Back Orifice or NetBus, but these are easy to detect. They are already widely available and living on your hard drive. Java and JavaScript, DHTML, various plug-in technologies, and ActiveX, do the dirty on you and disappear forever.

This is why virus profiling is making a comeback. Looking for unsociable activity, rather than specific programs, is a more effective solution. Profiling isn't touted as a 10 year old technology but a brand new one – heuristic analysis (increasing the probability of solving the problem) is a favourite description.

Profiling uses rules of behaviour to analyse a program, script or Java applet. A profiling anti-virus program doesn't need to identify a virus, just deny it access to your system.

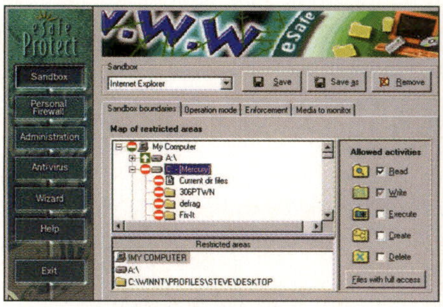
Instead of having to issue an update for every new instance of a virus or vandal, anti-virus vendors only have to issue updates for new types of attack, which are rare.

Safer browsing

Even if you're using Windows 95/98, you can still protect yourself against Net-associated viruses and vandals. Greater security comes at a price, though, and you're going to have to stop trusting everyone.

By default, Windows, Office and Internet Explorer will let anyone on the Net attack your system. You can change your browser security defaults, but it's too much fuss to do it every few minutes as circumstances change. Annoyingly, any security changes you make in IE apply to every window, so you could consider switching to another browser. Opera, for instance, lets you simply click to alter security settings for individual windows. And it doesn't support Java or ActiveX, which immediately

»


eSafe Protect
eSafe
Sandbox
Personal Firewall
Administration
Antivirus
Wizard
Help
Exit
Save
Save as
Remove
Sandbox boundaries
Operation mode
Enforcement
Media to monitor
Files with full access

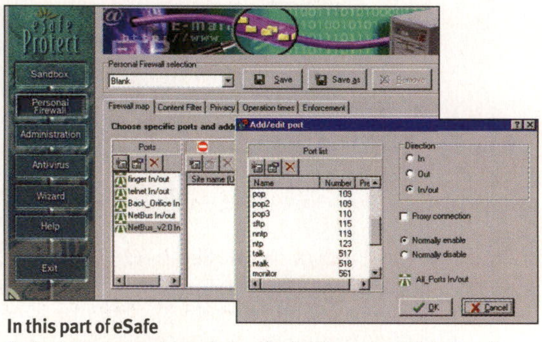
Sandbox: Internet Explorer

Map of restricted areas
My Computer
A:\
C: - [Mercury]
Current dir files
306PTWN
defrag
Fix-It

Restricted areas
MY COMPUTER
A:\
C:\WINNT\PROFILES\STEVE\DESKTOP

Allowed activities
☑ Read
☑ Write
☐ Execute
☐ Create
☐ Delete

eSafe Protect provides in-depth defence against a wide variety of virus, macro virus and vandal attacks. Here IE4 is being told which folders it can use


eSafe Protect
Sandbox
Personal Firewall
Administration
Antivirus
Wizard
Help
Exit
Save
Save as
Remove
Firewall map
Content Filter
Privacy
Operation times
Enforcement
Add/edit port
OK
Cancel

Personal Firewall selection: Blank

Choose specific ports and add

Ports
finger In/out
telnet In/out
Back_Orifice In
NetBus In/out
NetBus_v2.0 In

Site name (U

Port list

Name	Number
pop	109
pop2	109
pop3	110
sftp	115
nntp	119
ntp	123
talk	517
ntalk	518
monitor	561

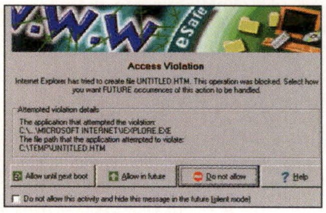
Direction
○ In
○ Out
● In/out

☐ Proxy connection

● Normally enable
○ Normally disable

All_Ports In/out

In this part of eSafe Protect, process ports are being blocked to prevent Web-based vandals from making contact with others on the Net


eSafe
Allow until next boot
Allow in future
Do not allow
Help

Access Violation

Internet Explorer has tried to create file UNTITLED.HTM. This operation was blocked. Select how you want FUTURE occurences of this action to be handled.

Attempted violation details
The application that attempted the violation:
C:\...\MICROSOFT INTERNET\IEXPLORE.EXE
The file path that the application attempted to violate:
C:\TEMP\UNTITLED.HTM

☐ Do not allow this activity and hide this message in the future (silent mode)

The eSafe Protect sandbox throws up a warning box if IE4 or anything it's running in a Web page tries to write, create or delete files in forbidden folders

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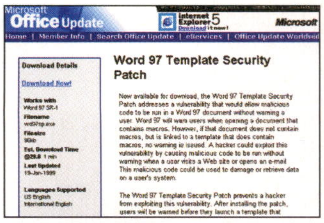


Word 97 Template Security Patch

Download Details

Works with
Word 97 SR-1
Filename
wd97sp.exe
Filesize
96kb
Est. Download Time
@28.8 1 min
Last Updated
19-Jan-1999

Languages Supported
US English
International English

Now available for download, the Word 97 Template Security Patch addresses a vulnerability that would allow malicious code to be run in a Word 97 document without warning a user. Word 97 will warn users when opening a document that contains macros. However, if that document does not contain macros, but is linked to a template that does contain macros, no warning is issued. A hacker could exploit this vulnerability by causing malicious code to be run without warning when a user visits a Web site or opens an e-mail This malicious code could be used to damage or retrieve data on a user's system.

The Word 97 Template Security Patch prevents a hacker from exploiting this vulnerability. After installing the patch, users will be warned before they launch a template that

At http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/downloaddetails/wd97sp.htm you'll find a useful security patch for Word. You should apply all available security patches to Windows and Office

removes much of the opportunity for vandals.

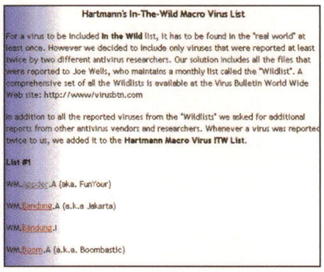
The cost of the extra security is that you lose access to some Web sites. For instance, Opera now supports JavaScript because so many sites use it. A few won't work without Java and there are even some sites that require ActiveX. They won't work.

You'll still want to download files from the Web. But to avoid disappointment, always get them from the original vendor's Web site. It's the one place you can be sure they'll be virus-free.

If the site offers PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) signatures for archived files, even better. This works in the same way as digitally signed email. PGP provides one of the best methods of ensuring a downloaded file is in the form provided by the original author.

Archives not exes

Never run or install a program direct from a Web page. Always download it and check it with a virus scanner first. Ideally, choose zip files over self-installing executables. It gives you a chance to check out the documentation and scan the unzipped files before running them, though many anti-virus utilities can scan zipped files as well.



Hartmann's In-The-Wild Macro Virus List

For a virus to be included **In the Wild** list, it has to be found in the "real world" at least once. However we decided to include only viruses that were reported at least twice by two different antivirus researchers. Our solution includes all the files that were reported to Joe Wells, who maintains a monthly list called the "Wildlist". A comprehensive set of all the Wildlists is available at the Virus Bulletin World Wide Web site: http://www/virusbtn.com

In addition to all the reported viruses from the "Wildlists" we asked for additional reports from other antivirus vendors and researchers. Whenever a virus was reported twice to us, we added it to the **Hartmann Macro Virus ITW List.**

List #1

WM.Appder.A (aka. FunYour)

WM.Bandung.A (a.k.a Jakarta)

WM.Bandung.I

WM.Boom.A (a.k.a. Boombastic)

There are endless virus lists on the Net, including the useful Hartmann's list of real world macro virus attacks

Don't download or run programs that are touted as amusements or toys, unless you really know and trust the people offering them. This type of novelty impulse download is a favourite method of getting a virus or vandal on to your computer. Popular toys and amusements are often infected deliberately.

Just like the real world, avoid sleazy areas of the Web. You're unlikely to have problems with anything on Sun or IBM's Web sites, but you can't be so sure of bOlEx hAcKnWaRez at one of the free ISPs. It's simple to set up Web pages completely anonymously at many of these, despite claims to the contrary.

Windows users should be particularly wary of files with .reg or .ins filetypes. Clicking the first changes your Registry, while the second changes Internet Explorer's setup. They're both open to abuse.

When you're calling me

Email used to be a simple matter. Now it's a wide open door into your system. The two main culprits are Web-enabled email and attachments.

All Net email programs support attachments – files sent along with the email. This is how macro viruses such as Melissa work – they send an email with an attached document that contains a copy of the macro virus.

If you get an email with an attachment, the first thing to do is see what kind of file it is. Look at the file name. Some files can't carry viruses, including basic graphic files – .jpg, .pcx, .gif, .png and .bmp. Some text files can't carry viruses, including .txt, .pdf and .rtf. Files that can carry viruses, macro viruses and vandals (though not necessarily all three) include:

htm	*Web page*
html	*Web page*
exe	*program*
com	*Dos program*
xls	*Excel spreadsheet*
xlm	*Excel workbook*
doc	*Word (and others)*
dot	*Word template*
wbk	*Office workbook*
wpm	*Wordperfect macro*
ppm	*Powerpoint*

None of these can cause any problems until you open them. Just receiving one won't do any harm.

Handle with care

The first thing to do with a suspect email attachment is use your virus software to scan it. Don't rely on a memory-resident background scanner. These aren't as thorough.

A virus scanner doesn't provide a complete check – it can only look for dangers it knows about. So if the attachment is a data file, such as a document, it's worth taking an extra precaution. If you don't need to edit it, only read it, then open it in a viewer.

Microsoft provides viewers for Excel, Word and Powerpoint documents or you can use a generic viewer such as Quickview Plus. The latter works for Web pages as well. The advantage of a viewer is that it won't run scripts or macro viruses.

Unfortunately, documents and spreadsheets can contain embedded code, including ActiveX or a straightforward vandal. You've scanned it, viewed it and opened it – but do you dare click on the icon embedded in the file with the legend Click Me? Play safe - don't touch it unless you know what it is and you're expecting it.

If you get an an unexpected executable attachment, even from someone you know, email or phone the sender to confirm they really sent it before running it. This is especially important if the email says it's funny. Toys are a favourite mechanism for virus and vandal distribution.

Finally, don't panic

Most reported viruses and vandals are nothing of the kind – they're hoaxes, such as the Good Time email, along with thunderstorms, user error and bugs. With a sensible and security-minded approach to using email and the Web, you can go forever without any virus or vandal problems. If anything strange happens, look for another reason. On the other hand, without precautions you'll definitely be the victim of viruses and vandals sooner rather than later.

Top tips for virus protection

1 Install and use an anti-virus program with heuristic capabilities

2 Keep the program's signature file up to date

3 Make regular backups of your data files

4 Only download files from the original vendor sites

5 Install a personal firewall and block unneeded ports

6 Ask for documents in formats which can't carry macro viruses

7 Turn off macro autorun in your applications

8 Use a viewer to read unsolicited documents attached to email

9 Open unsolicited Web pages sent as email attachments using a viewer

10 Increase your browser security settings to exclude Java and ActiveX

11 Never install programs directly from Web sites – download and scan them

12 Always check the origin and purpose of unsolicited program attachments

Further reading

Virus Scanners
Links to nearly all anti-virus products and updates
www.mysharewarepage.com/virus.htm

Computer Virus Myths
www.kumite.com/myths

Hartmann's In-The-Wild Macro Virus List
www.vdsarg.com/webdocs/perforin/perforin/perfor17.html

ICSA - security site
www.icsa.net/library/mal_cod/links.htm

That's Not A Virus!
www.av.ibm.com/1-2/Feature/Feature1

Virus Library – Hoaxes
Common hoax virus list
http://vil.nai.com/asp_set/anti_virus/library/hoaxes.asp

Anti-virus vendors

Symantec
www.symantec.com

Mcafee
www.mcafee.com

Datafellows
www.datafellows.fi/news/hoax.htm

Computer Associates
www.vet.com.au

Norman Data Defense Systems
www.norman.com

Sophos
www.sophos.com

Pandasasoft
www.pandasoftware.com

Dr Solomons
www.drsolomon.com/vircen/vanalyse/index.cfm

Quick Heal
www.quickheal.com

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5th	EasyNet	331	99.41%
11th	Netbenefit	211	99.76%
35th	Scotland Online	69	98.80%
54th	Corpex	49	98.74%
68th	RapidSite / Verio	19	99.39%

0 100 200 300 400

Source: Internet Magazine "Best Performing Hosting Companies", July 1999. Based on data from Zeus Technologies. Survey of 79 firms (not all shown). Please ask to see full list.

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How to add video to your Web site

If you've got a video camera, a PC and a connection to the Net, you can add footage to your Web site for free. Richard Baguley guides you through the process

Ten years ago, a video camera was something of a luxury item that needed a strong shoulder, technical nous and lots of battery power. But the prices and simplicity of today's video equipment mean many households in the UK now have access to a video camera. To reflect this reduction in cost and complexity, and the resulting widespread use of video kit, there are now plenty of cheap or free ways to put your video footage onto your Web site.

The first thing you'll need to do is get the video onto your computer – see the box on Getting the video onto your computer. You're then faced with a variety of choices about how to put this video on your Web site

Make a resolution

Before you start capturing your video, think about what size you'll want it to appear on your Web site. You might be tempted to use a full screen, 30 frames per second resolution, but this isn't going to work on the Web (unless you and your visitors have enormously fast Internet connections). If you're planning to change the video on your computer in any way (such as editing or outputting it to video), you'll need to use a high resolution, but this isn't necessary for broadcasting over the Internet. You don't need to use anything that's more than 150 pixels wide

Getting your video onto your computer

Before you put a video on your Web site, you need to get it onto your computer. Depending on how you shot the video, there are a variety of ways to do this at low cost.

If you've used a normal VHS or 8mm video camera, you could pick up a cheap video digitiser card such as the Iomega Buz (around £120 from www.iomega.co.uk/buz). Alternatively, you can digitise your video using a 3D accelerator card, such as the speedy new Voodoo3 3500 (around £175). These products will not only let you watch TV on your computer, they'll also let you take video from either the composite or S-Video output of your video camera, sample it and save it to your hard disk. The resolution these products save the video at could vary (and depend on the speed of your computer), but the resolution should be good enough to use the video on the Web.

If you're a using a digital camcorder (such as a DV or Digital 8 model), you can take the digital video and save it direct to disk with an IEEE 1394 interface card, such as the Miro DV300 (around £500). This is more expensive, but preserves the quality and video resolution.

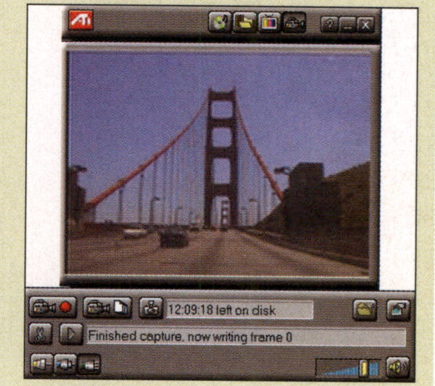
Mac users might not need any extra hardware – if you have an AV Mac, it comes with a built-in video input and can easily digitise video to disk. Modern Macs (such as the blue G3 and recently announced DV edition iMac) also come with an IEEE 1394 input (or Firewire as Apple calls it).

Creating video for the Web step by step

In this example, we've taken a two-minute video clip, digitised it, created a Real Networks G2 file and put the resulting film on the Web

1 Capture the video

In this example, we've used an ATI All-in-one Wonder Pro video card to capture the video, but the principle is the same however you do it. First, you specify the size that you want to capture the video at. We want to use this movie on a Web site, so a resolution of 178 by 131 pixels will be fine.

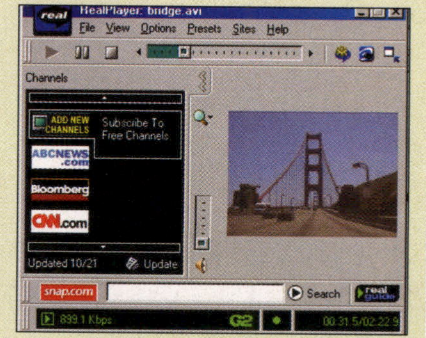


12:09:18 left on disk

Finished capture, now writing frame 0

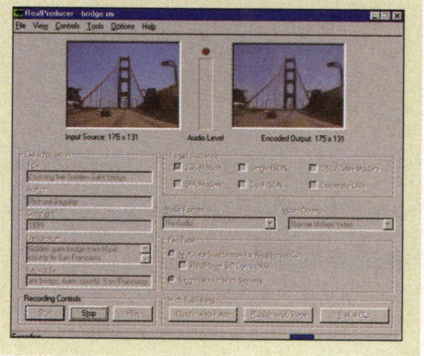
2 Check the file

You can now play the file to make sure it was captured properly. Our file plays back without any problems, but its size in in excess of 15Mb, and nobody will be able to download that.



3 Use RealProducer to encode the file

We've used the free version of the Real Networks RealProducer program. This compresses the file using Real's own streaming media format called G2. You tell the program which file you want to encode, the likely connection type of your visitors (we've set it to a 28.8k modem to be on the safe side) and press the start button. The program encodes the video and produces the G2 file, which is now the far more reasonable size of 384k.



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Video systems compared

Format	Web site streaming	HTTP streaming	Typical bandwith required to stream	Free encoder software	Free player software	Player included with Windows 98*	Player included with Mac OS*
Real Media G2	✔	✔	28.8 modem & up	✔	✔	✗	✗
Microsoft ASF	✔	✔	28.8 modem & up	✔	✔	✔	✗
Apple Quicktime 4	✔	✔	28.8 modem & up	✗	✔	✗	✔
AVI	✗	✗	ISDN	✔	✔	✔	✔
MPEG	✗	✗	ISDN	✔	✔	✔	✔

***currently shipping version only**

and 15 frames per second use it on your Web page.

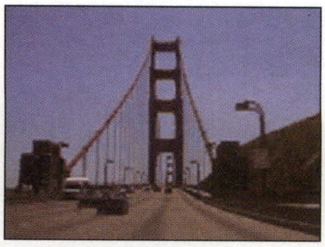
To stream or not to stream

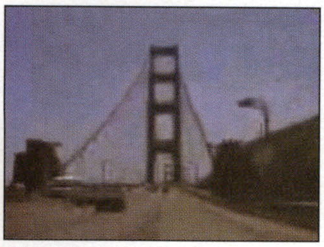
Your first big decision is whether to use streaming media or not. It's called streaming because your visitors don't have to wait for your entire video to download before they can see it – it starts playing straight away and uses buffering to deal with any glitches. This means your visitors can start watching your video within seconds.

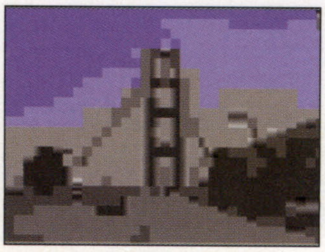
For the best results, you have to use a Web server which co-ordinates the process of streaming the file to your visitors. Some ISPs, such as Demon, offer this to their dial-up customers, but the service imposes limitations – you only get two streams, which means only two visitors can watch your video at any one time. Most providers only offer streaming as an additional service that costs extra.

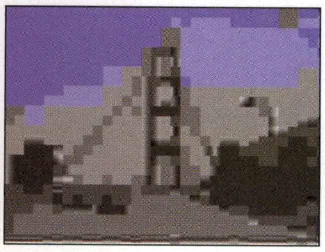
But there are ways to stream video without having a dedicated server. A process called HTTP streaming uses the Web server as a dedicated server and streams the video file to your visitors. The results of this aren't as good as a dedicated server, but you don't need any special software to use it. Your site's Web host must support HTTP streaming – most modern server software does this, but check with your ISP if you're unsure.

If you can't stream your video, your other option is to put a heavily compressed version of the video on your site so visitors can download it for playback. This isn't ideal because the file will still be large, no matter how much you compress it, and it'll take a while to download. But you can still use the streaming media formats in another way, because visitors can download your files and play them on their hard disks. We managed to compress a 15Mb AVI file into a 356k Real Media G2 file (see our step by step guide to creating video for the Web. This will still take a couple of minutes to download with a slow modem, but it's still quicker than


A frame from the original, uncompressed video file

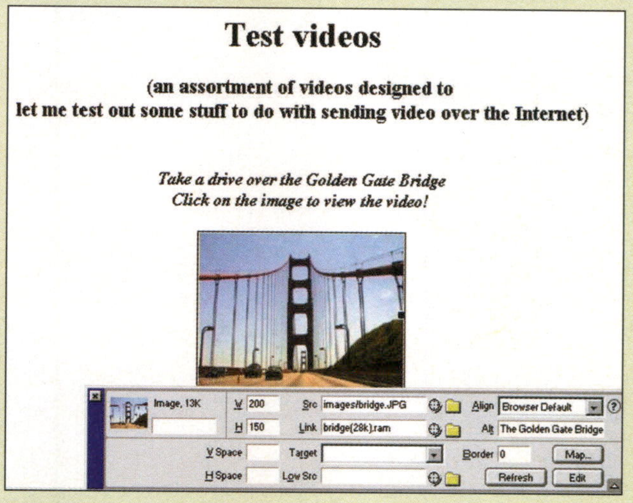

A frame from the video after compression with Real Network's G2 for an ISDN connection


A frame from the video after compression with Real Network's G2 for a 56k modem


A frame from the video after compression with Real Network's G2 for a 28.8k modem

4 Create the Web page

Now you can create the Web page that contains the video. To link to the video, you create a small text file (called bridge.ram in this case) that contains the location of the .rm file we produced in the last step. You link to this .ram file from the Web page, and it'll launch the RealPlayer program (assuming the visitor has installed it) and play your video.



Test videos

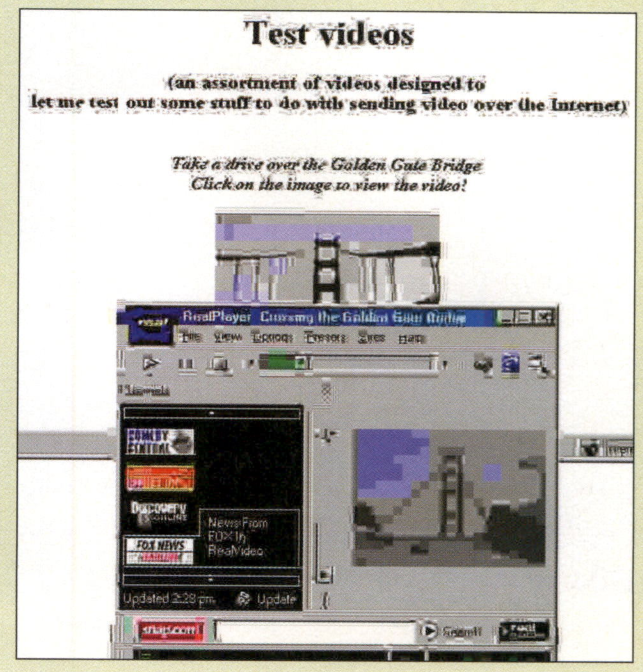
(an assortment of videos designed to let me test out some stuff to do with sending video over the Internet)

Take a drive over the Golden Gate Bridge
Click on the image to view the video!

Image, 13K
W 200
H 150
Src images/bridge.JPG
Link bridge(28k).ram
Align Browser Default
Alt The Golden Gate Bridge
V Space
H Space
Target
Low Src
Border 0

5 Test the result

Finally, you can go onto the Web site and test your results. And here it is – visitors to this site can drive over the Golden Gate bridge without getting out of their armchairs.



Test videos

(an assortment of videos designed to let me test out some stuff to do with sending video over the Internet)

Take a drive over the Golden Gate Bridge
Click on the image to view the video!

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File View Options Favorites Sites Help
News From FOX in RealVideo
Updated 2:28 pm
Update
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downloading a 15Mb file, which would take forever.

The formats on offer

Fortunately, there are a variety of different systems available which can compress video in this way, including RealNetwork's G2 and Microsoft's ASF (Active Server Format). The different formats have various strengths and weaknesses.

As you can see from the table on page 109, putting video on your Web site doesn't have to be expensive – the free programs will create files in all of the formats except QuickTime 4. RealNetworks, for instance, gives away a free version of its RealProducer program, but it also sells a commercial version. The commercial version has more bells and whistles, but these aren't necessary if you're just encoding a few files. To create QuickTime 4 files, you'll need to get hold of an encoder, such as Apple's own QuickTime Pro, which costs $29.99 (around £20).

The quality factor

As you can see, the streaming media formats have a number of advantages. The files they produce are much smaller and can be streamed if your Web server supports HTTP streaming. The disadvantage is that the image quality isn't as good as your original video. This is because the formats all rely on heavily compressing the video in order to send it down the limited bandwidth.

You can make the files look better, but this requires more bandwidth, so unless your visitors have a fast connection (such as a cable modem or a DSL connection), stick with a low bandwidth setting and experiment with a variety of other settings to get the best results.

You can see the loss of quality in the examples shown on the previous page.

As you can see, the quality of the compressed files for the 28.8k and 56k modem is poor – you can barely recognise some of the features. You only get the quality of your original video when it's used for ISDN, but it's unlikely that many of your visitors will have this kind of connection.

Resolution eats bandwidth

The other factor that'll influence the quality of your encoded video is resolution. The higher the resolution, the more data it requires and the worse the quality will be. Again, you have to compromise – full screen video might look great, but it's not a realistic option.

Don't go beyond a resolution of 200 pixels wide. You can double the screen size in most of the players by doubling the size of the pixels. In RealPlayer, click on the small magnifying glass to the left of the video window. In QuickTime, use the double size option in the movie menu. It's not an ideal solution (it makes your video look blocky), but it'll make it easier to see.

The quality of sound

The quality of sound will also suffer when you compress your video. So don't be surprised if little Johnny's rendition of Happy Birthday sounds like it's being transmitted via Mars. You can experiment with the various settings of the encoding program, which can usually improve things, but you'll never get stereo sound from a 28.8k connection.

Get with the program

The visitors to your site will need to have the appropriate player installed to see your video. For instance, if you've used RealNetwork's G2 file format, they'll need to have downloaded the RealPlayer program. Likewise, Microsoft's ASF format requires the Windows Media Player. A lot of visitors won't have these players, so make sure you provide links to relevant Web sites so they can download them.

Apple includes the QuickTime player with the Mac OS platform and Microsoft includes a version of the Windows Media player with all its recent operating systems, including Windows 98.

Experiment for fun and profit

Don't let any of the minor problems we've mentioned put you off – creating video for the Web is a simple process that doesn't require a high end PC or lots of expertise. Above all, remember that you get the best results from plenty of experimentation.

Resources

There are plenty of places that can give you more information on putting video onto your Web site – here are some recommended sites

Windows Media

www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia

Everything you've ever wanted to know about Microsoft's new Windows Media system (which includes the ASF format) but were afraid to ask. It's heavily biased towards a Microsoft view of the world, but there is some useful information in there.

Real Showcase

www.real.com/showcase/tech

Lots of technical information on the Real Networks G2 system

Streaming video comparison

http://emt.doit.wisc.edu/streamcompare

An interesting site that lets you try out different types of streaming video systems side by side. It's a bit out of date (there's no mention of QuickTime 4, for instance), but it's still a good way to try the different file formats without complicating things by having to try them from different sites.

Codec Central

www.terran.com/CodecCentral/index.html

Produced by Terran Interactive (who brought you MediaCleaner), this site contains lots of information on codecs, the programs that compress and decompress video data. It can get fairly technical, but there's a lot of very good information here.

Streaming Media World

www.streamingmediaworld.com

A good selection of articles about the whats, whys and wherefores of producing streaming video. It also covers the production of streaming audio and tips on shooting videos for streaming.

ABC TV Video section

www.abc-tv.net/video

This section of the ABC video site has loads of old TV station identification videos, such as the BBC 2 ident from 1968. It uses a nifty combination of Real Media G2 and AVI file formats.

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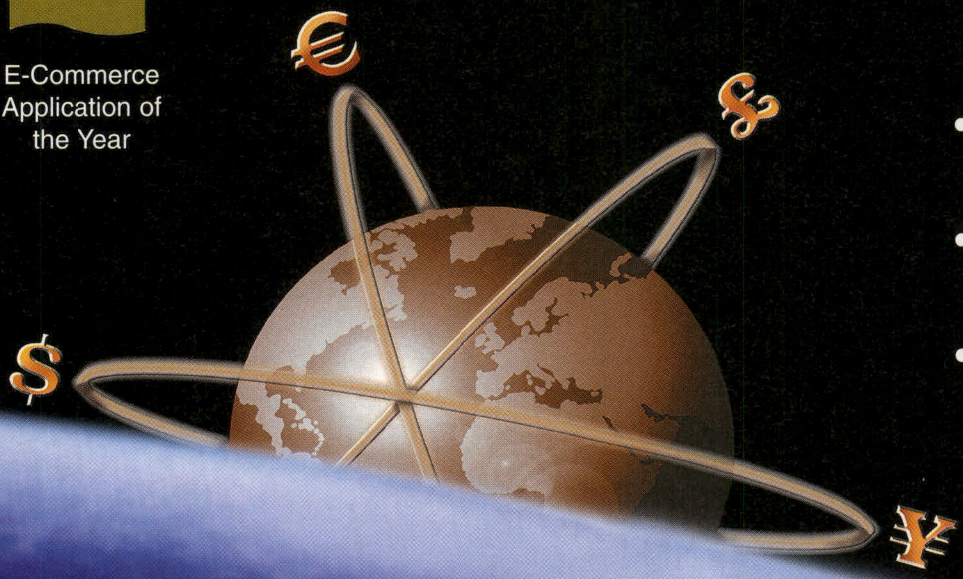

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Setting up shop on a budget

Selling your products or services online is a naturally daunting step if you're a small business that hasn't got thousands of pounds to spend. Mark Anstead shows you how to experiment with cheap and even free e-commerce solutions

Many small businesses are stuck in an e-commerce quandary. On the one hand, they think it'll cost an arm and a leg to create an online shop. On the other, there's the fear that you'll be left behind by your competitors and Internet startups, who could all end up stealing your established business, let alone the potential new revenue streams of the Net.

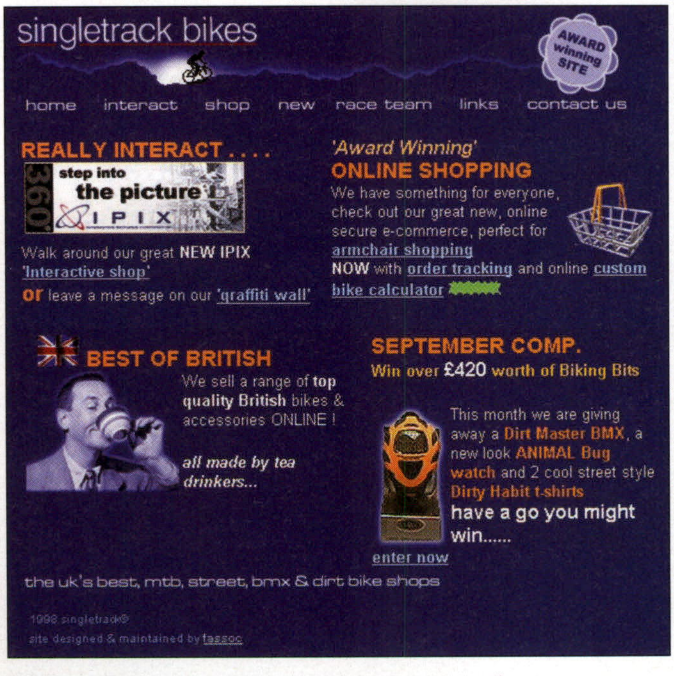
Fortunately, there are plenty of low-cost options available that'll let you create a simple online shop to test how your products sell online.

Rob Stephenson owns a specialist bike shop in Gloucester and was faced with this dilemma at the beginning of 1999. He already had a basic brochureware Web site that he set up in 1997, but added an online ordering facility using Actinic Catalog. After launching the service in March 1999, his Web site (**www.singletrack.co.uk**) now brings in £28,000 a month, representing 37 per cent of his total business revenue.

Before you rush out to buy an e-commerce solution, you need to ask a few questions about your business. There's a bewildering array of options on the market and they're all jostling for your attention. Each of these companies wants to be the next Microsoft, but it's not like choosing between word processing or spreadsheet packages. When it comes to e-commerce, each solution takes a radically different approach from its competitors.

Your entire business model will feel the impact of whether you've chosen a package that can integrate with back-office systems (such as databases and accounting packages) or which facilitates online credit card processing (involving merchant accounts and other hassles).

That said, there's one basic distinction you need to establish now – the difference between desktop software and server-based solutions.



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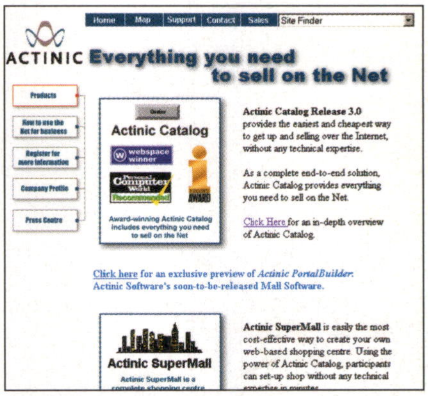

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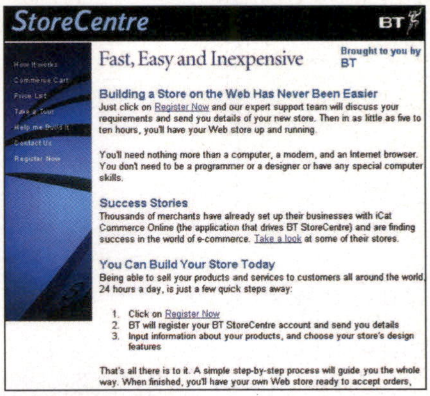

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BT StoreCentre uses iCat, an already popular solution

Desktop vs the Web

Welcome to the debate on whether server-based applications will take over the world. With server-based solutions, you have to do all your site building through your browser while you're online. With desktop software, you build your entire site offline through a Windows application. Gazing into their crystal balls, proponents of the server-based solution see a future of free Internet calls and broadband (high-speed) access. You'd then use all essential software through your browser. You wouldn't have to download or install any software again (except that it's all downloaded into your temporary Internet files folder).

So here's your choice – familiar offline PC software or an online browser interface. You have to decide which approach is best for you.

Many people think sites with shopping cart facilities should be built online. Your customers will be buying through a browser, so designing your site through the same interface is a good discipline and helps to make sure the final pages are easily accessible.

No one has yet argued in the same way for Web design. Significantly, ordinary Web sites are still built using software applications. So why don't people design Web sites online? The answer, in a word, is flexibility. Full-scale flexibility is hard to offer over a Web connection when every mouse click needs to wait for a corresponding ping. Broadband

»

THE COMPLETE A-Z OF BUILDING AN E-COMMERCE SITE.

A is for Actinic.

Actinic Software is the UK's best selling e-commerce software for the small to medium-sized business. From setting up a single web store to a complete e-commerce portal, Actinic enables web designers, hosting companies, VARs and ISPs to deliver e-commerce solutions easily and cost-effectively. So what else could you possibly need? Apart from our full information pack. See **www.actinic.co.uk** or call **01932 860524.**

ACTINIC e-asy to do business with.

Desktop-based software at a glance

Actinic Catalog
£349 + VAT from
www.actinic.co.uk

ecBuilder Pro
£299 + VAT from
www.ecbuilder.co.uk

shop@ssistant
£199 + VAT from
www.floyd.co.uk

AlphaCart
£29.95 from **www.faze.com**

Server-based software at a glance

Yahoo! Store
http://store.yahoo.com will cost you £70 per month for 50 items, £200 for 1,000 items

BT StoreCentre
www.icat.com/affiliates/jump.asp?affiliate=britishtelecom will cost you £38 per month for 50 items, £190 for 1,000 items

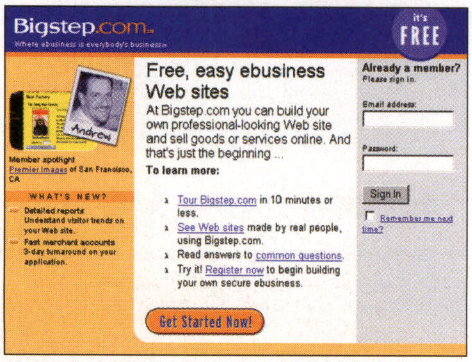
WebToolPro
www.webtoolpro.com will cost you around £50 per month for 200 items, £130 for 1,000 items

BigStep
www.bigstep.com is free of charge – no, really!

access might change all that one day, but not yet.

Whichever view you take, the availability of online design services has outstripped the number of desktop software solutions. This isn't necessarily an indication of popularity or superiority. Server-based solutions are easier to develop than desktop software, and the greed of ISPs wanting to keep you online for as long as possible might have something to do with it.

We've looked at the advantages and disadvantages of desktop and server-based solutions for creating your online shop. You can try both options if you have the time.



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- Read answers to common questions.
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Detailed reports
Understand visitor trends on your Web site.

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3-day turnaround on your application.

Bigstep.com is free and doesn't make you use its banner

Building your own

If you're strapped for cash, you could get a desktop solution for free, either on a trial basis (such as ecBuilder) or with limited functionality. Actinic Catalog's 'free five' version lets you sell five products until you upgrade the software, see **www.easyspace.com/newfaq/ecom.htm#11**.

The leading solution is Actinic Catalog, which has sold over 1,300 licenses in the UK. It can handle up to 10,000 items, offers online order processing and has a simple but brilliant approach to credit card security. If you want to process cards online or import product details from a database, this is the cheapest solution available.

ecBuilder Pro has a nice wizard-based interface, but it can only handle 2,000 items and collects orders via email, which isn't totally reliable. If you're prepared to pay extra, you can also set up online order processing.

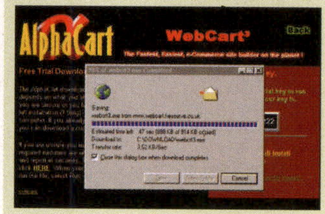
shop@ssistant can handle up to 2,000 products, but anything above this figure involves purchasing the database version of the software at £799. This version also doubles as a Java solution, but it can be rather slow and clunky.

AlphaCart offers cheap shareware handling up to 250 products over a maximum of 20 pages, including welcome pages, feedback and order forms. It's aimed at the lowest end of the market for businesses that might not even have merchant status with their banks for accepting credit cards. It collects orders via email, like ecBuilder. But as it's a low-cost starter, we decided to see how it compares with Yahoo!'s 10-day trial period server-based solution.

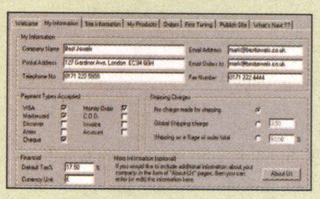
You should go for desktop software if you want to keep your telephone bill low and use the familiar Windows environment. There's the psychological benefit of feeling more in control (you build it on your local hard drive instead of the Web) and desktop software is usually more capable of integrating with back-end databases or accounting packages. It also makes financial sense – the server-based monthly fees can soon mount up.

AlphaCart

£29.95 from www.faze.com



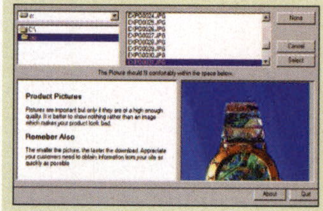
AlphaCart only took eight minutes to download. The site has a clever program that can analyse your system to see if you need a larger download file (which takes around 16 minutes to download) or whether you can get away with the smaller one.



Once installed, the software has an easy to use interface. There's a separate tab for each stage of the process, so you can easily navigate backwards and forwards to different stages of the setup if you don't have all the necessary information to hand.

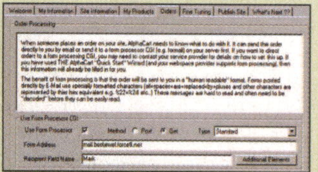
The simplicity of the software means you can identify page titles and keywords without being told about their importance if you want traffic from search engines. Cheap software can't do everything.

You can choose to accept orders by credit card, cheque, money order, cash on delivery, invoice or account. It's not aimed at businesses with merchant account status, who would probably limit the options to credit card purchases as a way of closing the sale.

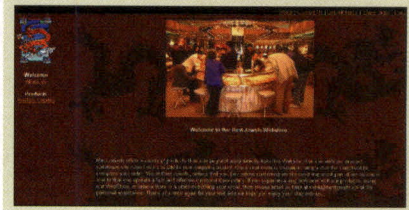


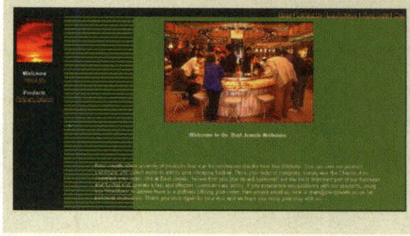
Using pictures is easy, but there's no real flexibility in specifying the size of your image or where you place it on the page. This isn't entirely a disadvantage - a lot of DIY sites have been ruined by giving amateurs the 'power of design', so let yourself be guided for a change.

There's no option for importing products from a database or integration with back-office functions. But this software would be more complicated and expensive if had these options.



You can specify how you want to receive orders from customers. These can be sent to you by email, but they'll be fairly unreadable because they're generated from a form (there+will+be+lots+of+pluses+where+there+should+be+spaces). You can tell AlphaCart to direct an order to a form-processing CGI first, which will be forwarded on to a specific email address. Either way, you'll have to get back into contact with every customer to close the sale and you might lose a few emails on the way.





The software comes with five well-designed templates. You can easily get a neat effect and change your template in seconds (see below). But there's no way of changing the size of your font or the position of your graphics or any other element of the design. Templates are customisable, but this'll cost you more.

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Listen!
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Doing it online

The server-based services all offer a limited number of templates and vary in their standard of functionality, depending on the price. The biggest surprise is BigStep, which offers a thorough service which is free and you're not subjected to the company's banner advertising on your site. It makes money by taking sponsorships from businesses trying to sell business services to you. So if you can cope with all the unwanted attention, this solution might be well worth a try.

BT's offering is essentially a co-branded version of the iCat service. iCat is among the most popular solutions in the US and a UK-specific service is now available.

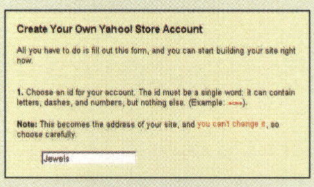
WebToolPro offers a limited number of similar-looking templates, but watch this space to see if more designs appear.

Yahoo! Store benefits from the high profile of its brand name and is straightforward to use. It's also easy to set up, in demonstration mode, with step by step help prompts appearing at the top of the screen. This is probably the UK's most popular Web-based service.

You should use a server-based solution if you want a fast start without the hassle of installing any software. It's slower to make site design changes, but this won't affect you much if you're not planning on too many regular updates (or you think fast and free Internet access is imminent).

Yahoo! Store

Yahoo! Store begins by setting up an account and space to host your Web pages. It's free for the first 10 days, which should be long enough to build your site, but as soon as you want to receive real orders, you have to pay. There's a nice touch to encourage you to sign up properly – until you pay, orders will be scrambled and you won't be able to read them.



Create Your Own Yahoo! Store Account

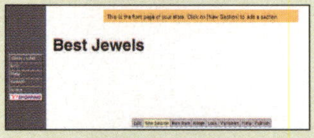
All you have to do is fill out this form, and you can start building your site right now.

1. Choose an id for your account. The id must be a single word: it can contain letters, dashes, and numbers, but nothing else. (Example: [illegible]).

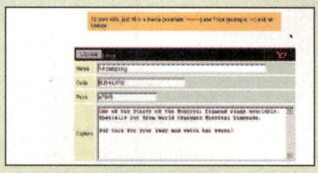
Note: This becomes the address of your site, and you can't change it, so choose carefully.

Jewels

It starts with a standard grey template, which is your front page. You now have to add the sections and items. The simple editing bar along the bottom contains all the functions you need at this stage, with a clear help bar running along the top. Stepping through the process from this point involves waiting for the server to respond, so don't try building or updating your site in the afternoons when the Web's painfully slow.

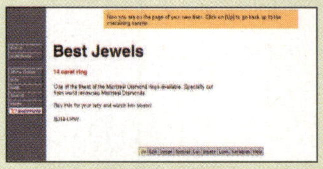


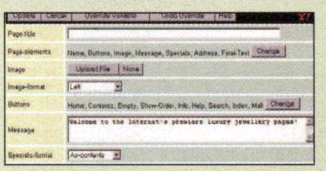
Entering item details is simple, but the process of uploading details from a database is limited, so it doesn't suit businesses that want to sell a lot of products.



Now you've got an item page, you'll be thinking about graphics. But you have to publish your Web page (using the tutorial) before you can get at some of the more advanced features.

The server offers you the chance to choose an intermediate or advanced editing interface. The page above comes up as a dialog box for adjusting your home page in an intermediate view (you're warned that this page could be destroyed if you choose the advanced option without the having the necessary HTML skills). You can change the elements and the number of columns easily. There isn't much flexibility over where to put your graphic, though you do get a choice of two sizes – thumbnail or large.





Page-title

Page-elements: Name, Buttons, Image, Message, Specials, Address, Final-Text

Image

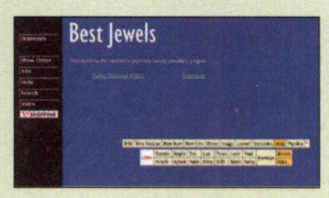
Image-format: Left

Buttons: Home, Contents, Empty, Show-Order, Info, Help, Search, Index, Mall

Message: Welcome to the internet's premiere luxury jewellery pages!

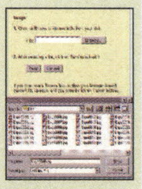
Specials-format: As-contents

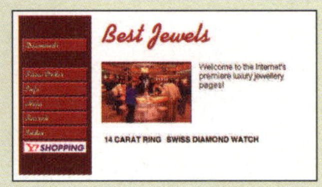
Changing the look of your page immediately rescues you from the dull standard layout. But running through the 14 template options soon reveals that the only things that change are screen colour and font. You can use a random button, but this just results in bad font matching – with some ghastly results. You'll get the best results by using the 12 standard options.



Adding images is simple, but make sure the image size is small to avoid tying up your connection for too long. The graphics used here are JPEGs between 10-20kb.

The results don't look too bad. The front page HTML links have been converted to GIFs for a neater appearance than underlined text. First, you set up a couple of items as specials, which means they get listed on the front page. In the Layout page, you need to go to the Specials dialog box and choose As Thumbnails. You can even specify that the item image is duplicated on the home page as a GIF as well.





Welcome to the Internet's premiere luxury jewellery pages!

14 CARAT RING SWISS DIAMOND WATCH

There are also legal issues you should be aware of, such as intellectual property rights, data protection and ad regulations. As you succeed and expand, there are agency agreements, employment law and financing to consider. For all these issues, visit E-commerce Incubator (**www.ecommerceincubator.net**), which is run by a team of legal professionals dedicated to helping startup Internet businesses. For £300 plus VAT, the team will give you a legal briefing explaining your obligations. im

What next?

To set up up a merchant account, visit The NetInvest Group (**www.netinvest.co.uk**). For basic marketing and promotion advice, visit deadlock Design (**www.deadlock.com**).

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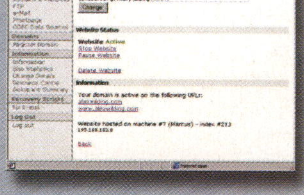

Settings for domain alexwilding.com

Home Directory

Change

Website Status

Website Active

Stop Website

Pause Website

Delete Website

Information

Your domain is active on the following URLs:

Website hosted on machine #7 (Marcus) - index #212

Back

The reseller account includes full access to the Fasthosts unique web-based control panel from which you can configure all features of your account

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* Offer valid until the end of January 2000

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tried & tested

This month's reviews// labs test / software / hardware / ISPs

In Tried & Tested

Internet Magazine is committed to bringing you the best and most authoritative reviews in the Internet industry. Every month we test and rate the most important new Internet products. If you're making a buying decision or doing a bit of pre-purchase research, the following pages are not to be missed.

In Tried & Tested you'll find comprehensive, comparative labs tests, reviews of the hottest Net products, and our exclusive ISP performance tests. »

CoffeeCup HTML editor take the labs test challenge
See page 122

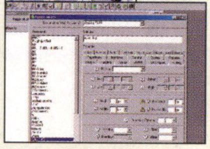
Key reviews for January

Hello from me!
And hello to you too!
Welcome!
This is a page about Rigby the Cat

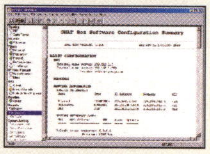
This month's labs test checks out basic Web design programs. If you're planning to build your first Web site, they can give you all the help you need
See page 122

Drumbeat 2000 is an complex and poweful professional package for building active server page sites
See page 125

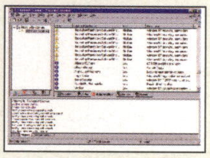
Frustrated by not being able to contact people using their phones for the Internet? You need OnLine Call Manager
See page 127



StyleMaster 1.5 isn't an HTML editor, but it'll help you create your own Cascading Style Sheets
See page 127



Don't spend thousands on your firewall. GNATBox 3 is a fully-featured software firewall product with a modest price tag
See page 128



ISS Internet Scanner 6 tests the security of your network against a range of attacks – by attacking your PC itself
See page 128

january 2000 internet magazine ISP of the Month

Our exclusive ISP tests are the biggest and the best. Don't choose an ISP until you've seen the results
See page 138

And find the best performing Web hosting companies in our tests
See page 145

Star Ratings

★★★★★	Must buy
★★★★☆	Should buy
★★★☆☆	Could buy
★★☆☆☆	Poor buy
★☆☆☆☆	Don't buy

Love at first site

Basic Web design programs

If you're planning to build your first site, basic Web design programs can help you create your pages, test them and upload them to a server. Richard Baguley and the labs team test a selection of user-friendly programs for aspiring Web designers

Professional designers need powerful tools to streamline their Web sites. But at the other end of the market, newcomers to Web design have different requirements. The most important criterion for beginners and home users is that a program makes it easy to produce Web pages. Most basic Web design programs break the process down into a series of steps, such as creating the pages, testing them and uploading them to the Web server.

Some of the programs in this labs test completely mask the process of writing HTML code, so you don't have to know anything about how HTML works – or even what it is – to start creating your Web pages.

These programs also play an educational role. It's important to gain a basic understanding of how Web pages work before moving on to more complex designs. To get the most out of HTML, you have to know how different browsers interpret code. Unfortunately, creating Web pages isn't like using a word processing package. When you create a document in Microsoft Word, for instance, you know it's going to look the same when someone else opens it in Word. But your finished Web pages could look completely different in Internet Explorer, Navigator and Opera.

The easiest option

The truth is, you don't need any of these programs to get started in Web design. You can use a simple text editor, such as Notepad or SimpleText, because Web pages are created using text documents and images.

The text files can be created in any program that can save text. All you have to do is add the HTML tags (in `<angle brackets>`) that tell the Web browser how to format your Web page and which images to load. This can be the best way to learn about Web design, because it encourages you to think about how Web pages work. This is important if you're going to design more complex pages – even though these programs can create the HTML for you. You'll get better results if you know how it works.

Making the images for your pages

The programs in this labs test can't edit images, so you'll need to find an easy to use graphics program. Fortunately, there are plenty available. Paint Shop Professional (from **www.jasc.com**) is a popular choice that's compatible with all of these programs. Another good program is Macromedia's Fireworks (from **www.macromedia.com**), but this is generally used by professionals.

Using what you have

An increasing number of programs let you export your text documents as HTML. For instance, Microsoft Word lets you create Web pages with just a couple of mouse clicks, and Microsoft Excel can export spreadsheets as Web pages. There's no guarantee that your pages will retain their format in a Web browser, though.

The programs in this labs test do a good job of transforming documents into Web pages, but they won't look exactly the same as they did in the original, so you'll have to do some editing after the documents have been saved as Web pages.

Jargon busting

HTML – HyperText Markup Language
The computer language that tells Web browsers how to format Web pages. HTML commands (usually called tags) are enclosed in angle brackets. For instance, `<P>` tells the Web browser to start a new text paragraph, while `<BR>` tells it to start a new line.

Forms
Forms are parts of a Web page that let your visitors select something or enter text. Once details have been entered, they can be processed by the Web server. The Web server can email the details to you or add them to a database.

Tables
Tables let you format a Web page by creating a series of cells, similar to a spreadsheet. You can put text, images and other content into these cells to produce a regular design on your Web page.

Frames
Frames effectively divide the browser screen into several Web pages, each of which is loaded separately. They're commonly used for menu bars, so they're always visible while visitors are exploring your site.

Java
Java is a programming language that's designed to be device – independent. A Java program should run on any computer. This means you can use Java applets on Web pages to add scrolling banners to your Web pages, for instance, without worrying about what sort of computer your visitors are using.

JavaScript
Not related to Java. JavaScript is a scripting language that lets you write short scripts that can change graphics on mouseover and check the values that your visitors enter into forms.

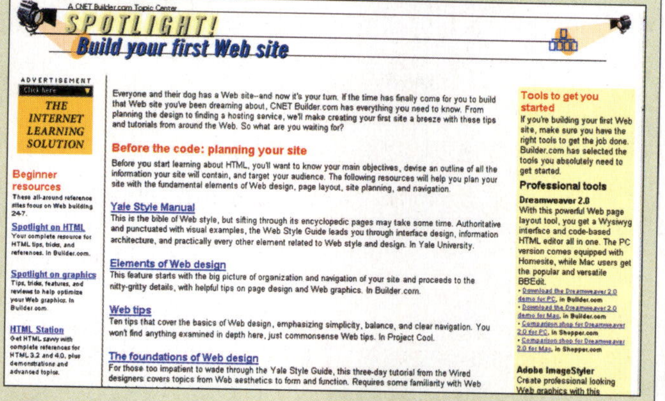
Learning how to build Web pages – where to begin

Learn the basics of Web design with these five recommended sites

Builder.com

www.builder.com

This excellent site from CNET covers basic and professional Web design, and there's plenty of information here. For newcomers to Web design, the section on building your first site (at **www.builder.com/Authoring/Newbies**) will be particularly useful, as it contains links to loads of excellent articles on Web design for beginners.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Everyone and their dog has a Web site--and now it's your turn. If the time has finally come for you to build that Web site you've been dreaming about, CNET Builder.com has everything you need to know. From planning the design to finding a hosting service, we'll make creating your first site a breeze with these tips and tutorials from around the Web. So what are you waiting for?

Before the code: planning your site

Before you start learning about HTML, you'll want to know your main objectives, devise an outline of all the information your site will contain, and target your audience. The following resources will help you plan your site with the fundamental elements of Web design, page layout, site planning, and navigation.

Yale Style Manual
This is the bible of Web style, but sifting through its encyclopedic pages may take some time. Authoritative and punctuated with visual examples, the Web Style Guide leads you through interface design, information architecture, and practically every other element related to Web style and design. In Yale University.

Elements of Web design
This feature starts with the big picture of organization and navigation of your site and proceeds to the nitty-gritty details, with helpful tips on page design and Web graphics. In Builder.com.

Web tips
Ten tips that cover the basics of Web design, emphasizing simplicity, balance, and clear navigation. You won't find anything examined in depth here, just commonsense Web tips. In Project Cool.

The foundations of Web design
For those too impatient to wade through the Yale Style Guide, this three-day tutorial from the Wired designers covers topics from Web aesthetics to form and function. Requires some familiarity with Web

Beginner resources
These all-around reference sites focus on Web building 24-7.

Spotlight on HTML
Your complete resource for HTML tips, tricks, and references. In Builder.com.

Spotlight on graphics
Tips, tricks, features, and reviews to help optimize your Web graphics. In Builder.com.

HTML Station
Get HTML savvy with complete references for HTML 3.2 and 4.0, plus demonstrations and advanced topics.

Tools to get you started
If you're building your first Web site, make sure you have the right tools to get the job done. Builder.com has selected the tools you absolutely need to get started.

Professional tools

Dreamweaver 2.0
With this powerful Web page layout tool, you get a Wysiwyg interface and code-based HTML editor all in one. The PC version comes equipped with Homesite, while Mac users get the popular and versatile BBEdit.
- Download the Dreamweaver 2.0 demo for PC, in Builder.com
- Download the Dreamweaver 2.0 demo for Mac, in Builder.com
- Comparison shop for Dreamweaver 2.0 for PC, in Shopper.com
- Comparison shop for Dreamweaver 2.0 for Mac, in Shopper.com

Adobe ImageStyler
Create professional looking Web graphics with this

Dave's HTML Resource Center

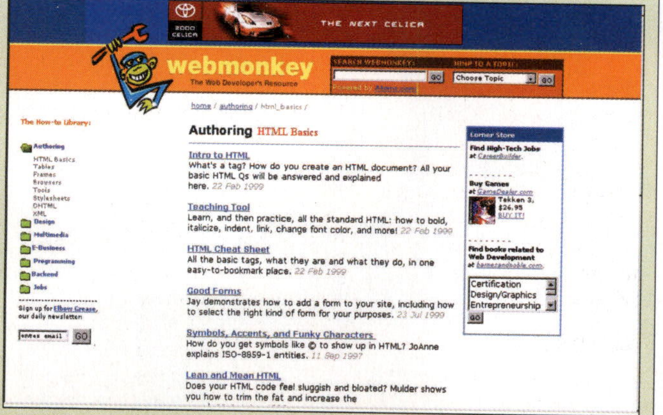
www.aldergrange.lancs.sch.uk /html

For its size, Dave's HTML Resource Center has some excellent information, including a First Steps in Design section.

Webmonkey

www.webmonkey.com

Webmonkey is produced by Wired Digital, the company behind a variety of sites such as HotWired and Wired News. It has an excellent section on starting in Web design at **www.hotwired.com/webmonkey/authoring/html_basics**. Webmonkey has also produced an excellent guide to building Web sites aimed at kids (at **www.hotwired.com/webmonkey /kids**).



home / authoring / html_basics /

Authoring HTML Basics

Intro to HTML
What's a tag? How do you create an HTML document? All your basic HTML Qs will be answered and explained here. 22 Feb 1999

Teaching Tool
Learn, and then practice, all the standard HTML: how to bold, italicize, indent, link, change font color, and more! 22 Feb 1999

HTML Cheat Sheet
All the basic tags, what they are and what they do, in one easy-to-bookmark place. 22 Feb 1999

Good Forms
Jay demonstrates how to add a form to your site, including how to select the right kind of form for your purposes. 23 Jul 1999

Symbols, Accents, and Funky Characters
How do you get symbols like © to show up in HTML? JoAnne explains ISO-8859-1 entities. 11 Sep 1997

Lean and Mean HTML
Does your HTML code feel sluggish and bloated? Mulder shows you how to trim the fat and increase the

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Find High-Tech Jobs at CareerBuilder.

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Tekken 3, $26.95 BUY IT!

Find books related to Web Development at barnesandnoble.com.

Brandy's Web Design Emporium

www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/1288/index.html

Another small site, but there's plenty of good information here, including a good selection of design sets, full of buttons, logos, fonts and other things that can be used on Web pages.

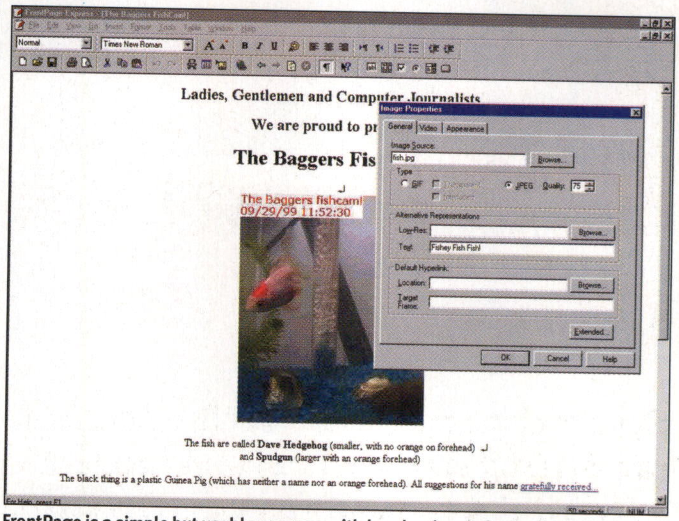
Web Design 101

www.w3creator.com/design /wdes101.html

Covers all of the need-to-know information for aspiring Web designers and excellent tips for making sure your design works.

MICROSOFT

FrontPage 2



Ladies, Gentlemen and Computer Journalists

We are proud to pr

The Baggers Fis

The Baggers fishcam!
09/29/99 11:52:30

The fish are called **Dave Hedgehog** (smaller, with no orange on forehead)
and **Spudgun** (larger with an orange forehead)

The black thing is a plastic Guinea Pig (which has neither a name nor an orange forehead). All suggestions for his name gratefully received...

Image Source: fish.jpg

Quality: 75

Text: Fishey Fish Fish!

FrontPage is a simple but usable program with handy wizards for beginners

Microsoft's offering keeps things simple, doesn't give you any extras

Microsoft's FrontPage 2 is a cut-down version of FrontPage 2000. You might already have this software on your computer – it comes with Internet Explorer 5 and the Windows 98 Update system (select Windows Update from your Start menu).

FrontPage takes a standard WYSIWYG approach, with everything appearing on the main page. There are no floating toolbars, but the toolbars at the top of the screen can be made into floating boxes. It looks and feels more like a word processor than a Web design program – a good thing for beginners.

Unsurprisingly, you don't get FrontPage 2000's powerful features, but there are some tools to make things easier. There's one for building tables, where you simply drag the table out to the dimensions you want and it generates all the code. There's also some good support for building forms for feedback sections or questionnaires. But there's no support for frames at all – they aren't even mentioned in the (otherwise good) help files. But then the Web design novice doesn't need to experiment with frames.

FrontPage 2 lets you edit the raw HTML behind your page, which is always useful for discovering how HTML works. You can also drop in HTML code from other sources (such as a JavaScript written elsewhere), but these won't appear within the program itself – they'll only appear when the page is displayed in a Web browser.

For complete novice Web designers, FrontPage 2 has several wizards that automatically create different Web pages, such as a personal home page or a survey form. These are simple to use – the wizard asks you a series of questions, you input the information, and it generates a page, which you can then personalise.

But these wizards are the only kind of prebuilt pages included, and there are none of the other goodies (such as sample pages, ready-written JavaScript or libraries of graphics) that the other programs in this labs test offer. While these aren't exactly essential, they help to get new users going. There are three WebBot components (which let you add a 'last updated' timestamp, features from other pages and a primitive search system) and the ability to include ActiveX components and Java applets, but none of these are included with the program. Instead, you have to download them, although the program will generate the HTML code to integrate them on the page.

You can't get much better than FrontPage 2 for value because it's absolutely free. While it's not the greatest Web design program in the world, it's a good program for a relative newcomer to use thanks to its simple, unsophisticated approach.

★★★★☆

FrontPage 2

Price *Free*
Pros *Free, easy to use*
Cons *Lacks some of the tools and templates of other programs*
Contact *Microsoft UK*
Phone *(0870) 601 0100*
www.eu.microsoft.com/uk

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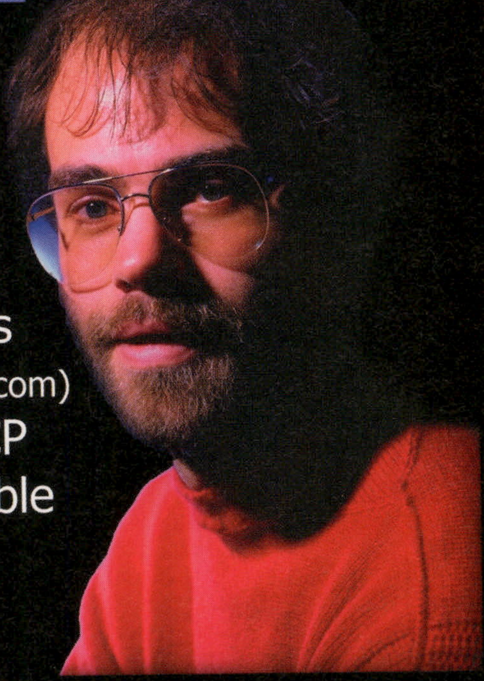

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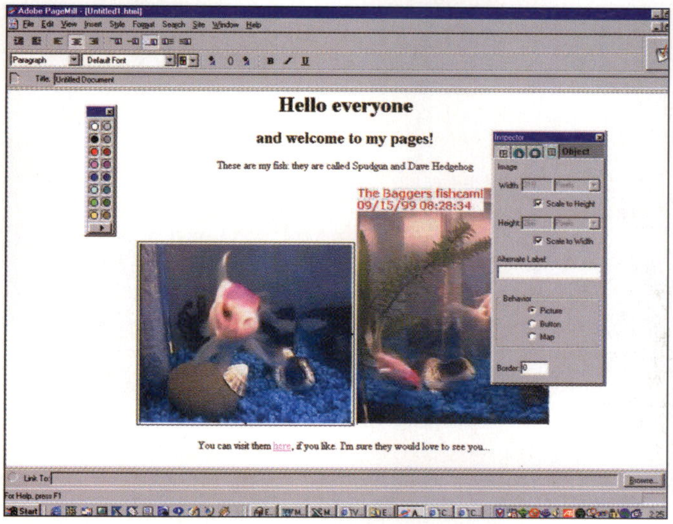
ADOBE

PageMill 3



Hello everyone

and welcome to my pages!

These are my fish: they are called Spudgun and Dave Hedgehog

The Baggers fishcam!
09/15/99 08:28:34

You can visit them here, if you like. I'm sure they would love to see you...

PageMill's interface is uncluttered, but you can't customise it

The latest version of this veteran Web editor is aimed firmly at the home user

PageMill is a veteran of the Web design market – it was the first commercial WYSIWYG Web page editing program (version 1 was released in 1995) and did a lot to bring Web page design to the masses by making it simple. This is the third and most recent version of the program. Earlier versions were aimed at professional users, but PageMill 3 is aimed at the home and small business user.

The program is easy to use, taking a WYSIWYG approach, with a floating inspector window containing all the technical stuff. Images or text can be added to Web pages by simply dragging them from another program or the desktop and dropping them into the page.

The Inspector window has four separate sections for frames, the entire page, forms, and the selected object. This approach means almost everything you need is close to hand, but you'll still have to access from the menu. The Inspector window can't be customised, though, so you can't add or remove options.

PageMill has a good selection of features, including support for tables, frames and forms. All of these are easy to use – you can create tables by specifying the dimensions and dragging the cell borders around as required. You can create frames by dividing the page up and dragging the frame border around to size the frames.

You can also look at the HTML code behind your site, which is colour-coded to mark the different elements. There's a good site management section that lets you check for broken links within the site and on the Internet. There are also some nice added extras, such as the statistics page that shows you the size of the entire site, which is useful if you're trying to keep your site within the space restrictions of your ISP. This also tells you how much of your Web space is taken up by your images, Web pages and Java applets.

There's no shortage of templates and things to use on the page – the program comes with a selection of prebuilt Web pages, graphics and page furniture. There's also a good selection of JavaScripts and Java applets for things such as scrolling banner messages.

Despite this, PageMill seems to be lagging behind. While other programs are adding more bells and whistles, PageMill has remained simple. The only thing that differentiates this from FrontPage is the inclusion of the templates and other stuff, but you can get a lot of this from the Internet anyway.

★★★☆☆

PageMill 3

Price *£92.83*

Pros *Easy to use, plenty of sample pages and templates*

Cons *Can't be customised, missing some of the more powerful features of other programs*

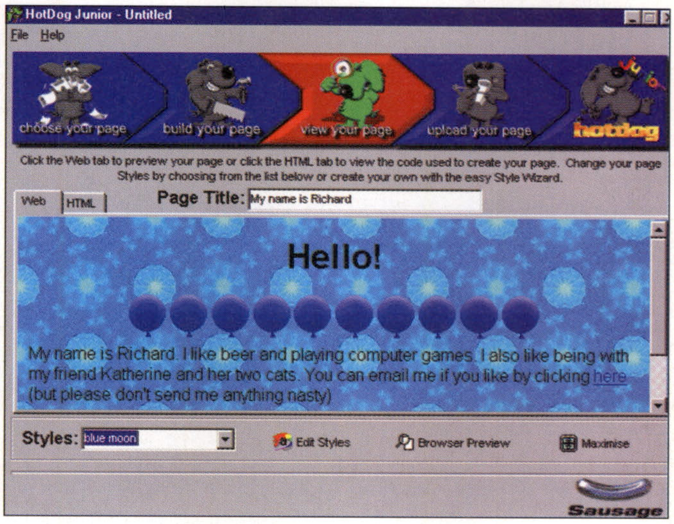
Contact *Adobe UK*

Phone *(0131) 453 2211*

www.adobe.com

SAUSAGE SOFTWARE

HotDog Junior



Click the Web tab to preview your page or click the HTML tab to view the code used to create your page. Change your page Styles by choosing from the list below or create your own with the easy Style Wizard.

Page Title: My name is Richard

Hello!

My name is Richard. I like beer and playing computer games. I also like being with my friend Katherine and her two cats. You can email me if you like by clicking here (but please don't send me anything nasty)

Styles: blue moon

A Web design program that's well-suited to younger designers

HotDog Junior is aimed at younger or complete newbie Web designers

This program has been designed for kids who are interested in Web design. It takes a four-step approach to building pages – you choose a template, build your page, view your page and upload it to the server.

You start off by choosing one of the 10 templates that's included with the program, with themes such as My School, Pretty in Pink or Space. Each of these is effectively a prebuilt page containing images, text and other bits, such as sounds. You can then edit the text, replace the images and add new components if you need to. This doesn't involve any HTML editing – the Web page is built from a series of Web blocks, each of which is an image, paragraph of text or a line. New Web blocks can be added as required, and unwanted ones can be deleted. Clicking on any of the Web blocks brings up the properties, such as the image source or the text in the paragraph.

Once the page has been built, your next step is to view it. The viewing page lets you apply styles to the page (including backgrounds, text colour and link colour), but you can't edit the individual parts of the page. New styles can be designed from here, and there's also a browser preview button, which saves the file and kicks off the default Web browser. You can't edit the text and images on the page in the view, but it's possible to skip back and forth between the steps, so you can edit the page, view it, and skip back to the editing section.

Finally, you can upload your pages to the Web server. Once you've supplied the details of the server, the uploading process is done automatically, and it also posts your images, sounds and anything else used on your pages.

This whole process works well, and it's easy to use. But the non-WYSIWYG approach could confuse some beginners. The idea of using Web blocks is interesting, but it seems to overcomplicate the process and limits what you can do. For instance, you can't put a link into a paragraph unless you either edit the HTML or split the paragraph into two and put the link in the middle, because links have to be Web blocks of their own.

The small number of templates is also rather limiting, and most children will quickly outgrow them and want to design their own pages from scratch. Fortunately, there's a blank template, so you can build new templates or modify existing ones. Despite these limitations, HotDog Junior is an excellent way for complete beginners and kids to get an introduction to the principles of Web design. You won't build the world's flashiest pages with HotDog Junior, but it's a good way to get started.

★★★☆☆

HotDog Junior

Price *$39.95 (around £26)*

Pros *A good, basic introduction to Web design*

Cons *Not particularly powerful, some might find the approach restrictive*

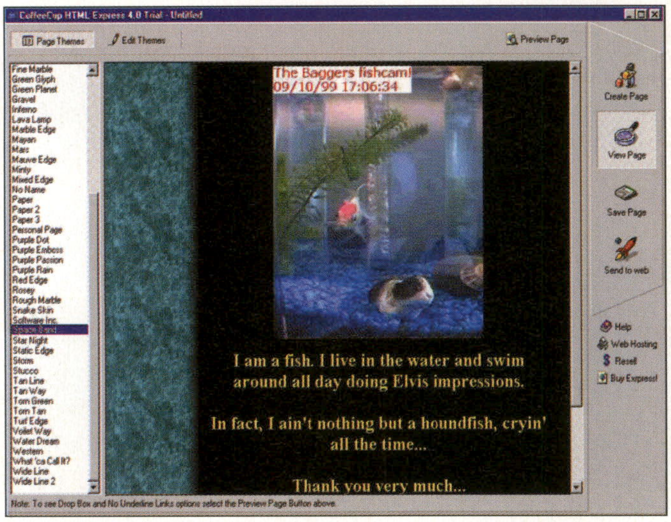
Contact *Sausage Software*

Phone *(0061) 39 662 2627*

www.sausage.com

COFFEECUP

CoffeeCup 4


CoffeeCup HTML Express 4.0 Trial - Untitled
Page Themes
Edit Themes
Preview Page
Fine Marble
Green Glyph
Green Planet
Gravel
Inferno
Lava Lamp
Marble Edge
Mayan
Mars
Mauve Edge
Minty
Mixed Edge
No Name
Paper
Paper 2
Paper 3
Personal Page
Purple Dot
Purple Emboss
Purple Passion
Purple Rain
Red Edge
Rosey
Rough Marble
Snake Skin
Software Inc.
Space Sand
Star Night
Static Edge
Storm
Stucco
Tan Line
Tan Way
Tom Green
Tom Tan
Turf Edge
Violet Way
Water Dream
Western
What 'ca Call It?
Wide Line
Wide Line 2
The Baggers fishcam!
09/10/99 17:06:34
Create Page
View Page
Save Page
Send to web
Help
Web Hosting
Resell
Buy Express!

I am a fish. I live in the water and swim around all day doing Elvis impressions.

In fact, I ain't nothing but a houndfish, cryin' all the time...

Thank you very much...

Note: To see Drop Box and No Underline Links options select the Preview Page Button above.

CoffeeCup HTML Express takes a step by step approach to creating Web pages

A simple, but well executed Web design program with no HTML worries

CoffeeCup HTML Express takes a similar approach to HotDog Junior. You follow a series of steps to build your Web page from a template. You build your page, view it, save it to disk and upload it to the Web server. The whole process works well and helps the novice build a Web page without ever having to worry about HTML.

Building pages is a simple process in CoffeeCup HTML Express – all you have to do is drag the different parts of the page, such as images, paragraphs and headers (the program refers to them as pagelettes) into the list and enter the contents of each pagelette. For instance, with a paragraph pagelette, you enter your text in the paragraph and decide the font and colour you want to use.

You can also choose how you want images to be aligned. A details pagelette at the top of the list lets you set the title of the page, as well as adding META tags such as Keywords (which search engines use to index sites) and expiry (when the page will become out of date). You can also add a PICS label (which labels the content of the page for violence or adult content, for instance) as a META tag.

As with HotDog Junior, many people will find this approach limiting after their first few pages. The process is simple, but it creates a number of limitations. It restricts the things you can do with your Web page – it includes some limited support for forms (you can create forms that will email you when visitors enter their details), but there's no support for tables or frames.

The program comes complete with an excellent selection of templates that can be used to set the theme for the page. You can try out different templates by simply selecting them from the list in the view page section, and the program will automatically update your page with the new template. There are also a few sample Web pages for you to try out.

Finally, the program can automatically upload your Web page and any images used on it. All you need to do is supply the program with the details of the Web server (such as address and password) and you only have to do this once. The program can hold details of several different Web servers, which could be useful if several people want to use CoffeeCup to build their own Web pages.

This program provides a good introduction to building Web pages, and it's so simple to use that children won't have a hard time getting to grips with it, although most people will probably grow out of this program quickly and feel cramped by its limitations. But it's a good program at a sensible price, and a great way of getting into Web design.

★★★★☆

CoffeeCup HTML Express 4

Price *$30 (approx £20)*

Pros *Easy to use, plenty of templates to choose from*

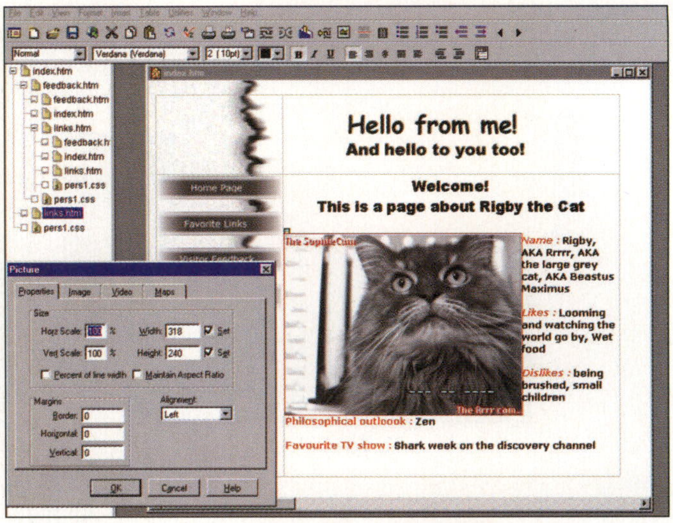
Cons *No HTML editing, some users may find restrictions limiting*

Contact *CoffeeCup*

www.coffeecup.com

THE THOMPSON PARTNERSHIP

WebExpress 3


Normal
Verdana (Verdana)
2 (10pt)
index.htm
feedback.htm
feedback.htm
index.htm
links.htm
feedback.h
index.htm
links.htm
pers1.css
pers1.css
links.htm
pers1.css
Home Page
Favorite Links
Visitor Feedback
Picture
Properties
Image
Video
Maps
Size
Horz Scale: 100 %
Width: 318 ☑ Set
Vert Scale: 100 %
Height: 240 ☑ Set
☐ Percent of line width
☐ Maintain Aspect Ratio
Margins
Border: 0
Horizontal: 0
Vertical: 0
Alignment: Left
OK
Cancel
Help

Hello from me!

And hello to you too!

Welcome!

This is a page about Rigby the Cat

Name : Rigby, AKA Rrrrr, AKA the large grey cat, AKA Beastus Maximus

Likes : Looming and watching the world go by, Wet food

Dislikes : being brushed, small children

Philosophical outloook : Zen

Favourite TV show : Shark week on the discovery channel

WebExpress is a simple WYSIWYG page editor, but it works well

A well thought out and relatively simple Web page editor with handy wizards

WebExpress 3 takes a purely WYSIWYG approach. You edit the page on the screen and the program creates the HTML behind the scenes. This is a common approach for beginners – it lets you look at your HTML code if you want to, or forget about it if you don't. You can edit the HTML code, but this can't be done within the program itself – you have to use an external text editor, such as Notepad.

WebExpress is a simple but nicely designed Web editor with most of the tools you'll need, including tables and a good forms wizard. You can automatically create several different types of forms, such as user feedback and credit card ordering. There's also a good style sheets editor, which deals well with this complex area. Frames are also supported, but not particularly well.

You can build pages that use frames, but it doesn't handle them well, because the frames view of the program doesn't show you the actual pages – all you get is the name of the frame and the Web page that'll appear in it. This would be OK for simple pages, but it wouldn't do for more complex sites – you'll need a program such as Dreamweaver instead. There's also a map of your site (which looks similar to Windows Explorer) on the lefthand side of the screen.

An odd omission is Java support. You get support for JavaScript and ActiveX, but no way to insert a Java applet, apart from writing the HTML code to put it on the page manually and adding this to the page using the Insert HTML option. This seems like an odd thing to exclude, especially since the less popular ActiveX system is supported.

Another useful feature of WebExpress is the image text editor, which you can use to generate text headers that are stored as image files. All you have to do is type in the text you want, select the font and font size, and the program automatically generates the image file. The technique of creating headers as images is being used less however, as style sheets give designers more control over text, but it's still a nice option to have available. It can even do things like set the number of colours used in the image file (the fewer the colours, the smaller the file and the quicker it will download). You also get a spellchecker.

WebExpress wouldn't be suitable for a professional Web designer, but it's not supposed to be. Instead, it does a good job of providing a simple way to create pages without overcomplicating things. More support for direct editing of the HTML code would be welcome, but this isn't essential.

★★★☆☆

WebExpress 3

Price *£57.58*

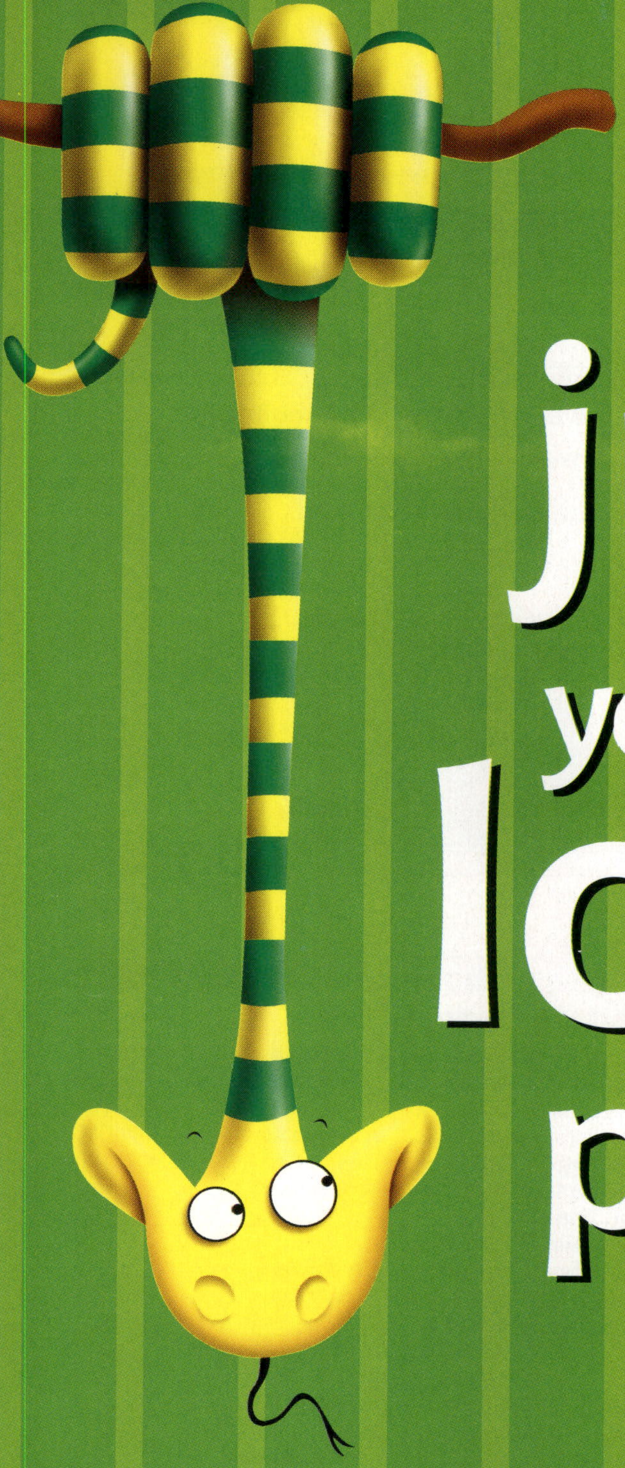
Pros *A simple, easy to understand approach to building simple pages*

Cons *Can't handle things like tables and frames*

Contact *The Thompson Partnership*

Phone *(01889) 564 601*

www.ttp.co.uk



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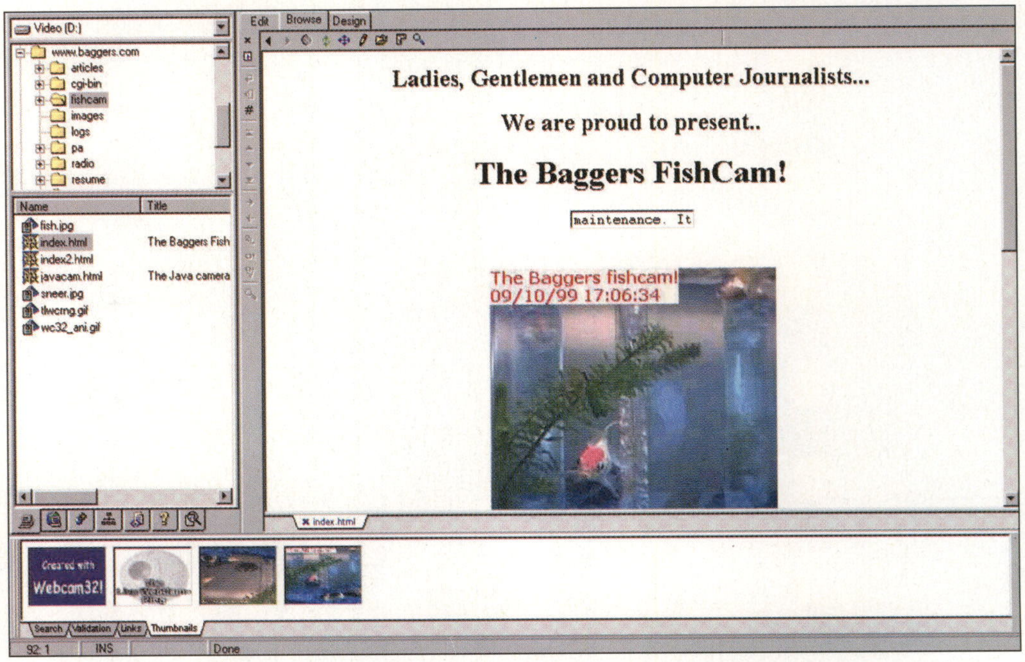
ALLAIRE

HomeSite 4

A good program that encourages you to get to grips with HTML



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The Baggers FishCam!

maintenance. It

The Baggers fishcam!
09/10/99 17:06:34

HomeSite lets you switch between coding and design modes to see how your page is developing

Allaire is best known for its ColdFusion product, which connects Web sites with databases. So it's no surprise that HomeSite takes a businesslike approach to the process of creating pages. The program is aimed at people who want to delve into HTML code, and isn't really aimed at complete novices.

But it does give you an excellent way of learning how HTML works by writing it direct. HomeSite uses a code-based approach to designing pages, but you can choose to work in WYSIWYG mode, and it's easy to switch between the two. You simply click on the Edit (for an HTML view) or Design (for a WYSIWYG view) tag at the top of the window with the page being edited. There's also a Browse view, which gives you a page preview. While this approach works well, it has its quirks. For instance, when you load a page including a JavaScript scrolling banner, the banner appears in the Browser view, but not in the Design view. The Design view simply ignores the JavaScript, which could be confusing for beginners. The manual warns you this can happen, and says "This is not an attempt to target users who do not want to learn/use HTML who are probably better of using a WYSIWYG development tool, such as FrontPage."

January 2000
internet magazine
Best Buy

In other words, if you're looking for a program where you don't have to learn HTML, don't bother with HomeSite.

You get a wide range of editing tools with this program. They're divided into nine sections – common, fonts, tables, lists, forms, scripts, CFML (ColdFusion Markup Language), ASP and frames. All can be accessed from the tags at the top of the toolbar, and you can drag these tools into a floating toolbar if you use them a lot.

There are lots of other nice touches, such as the way it automatically creates thumbnails of images in a directory, so you can simply drag and drop the image onto your page. There's also a spiderweb view of links on a page, and clicking on any of these takes you to the appropriate section of HTML. You also get an excellent HTML validator that can check the HTML syntax of an entire page or an individual HTML tag. This works well with the excellent HTML reference help files, which cover subjects such as Java applets and ColdFusion.

HomeSite doesn't sit well with some of the other programs in this labs test. But if you've done a bit of Web page design and you want to experiment with HTML, this program is an excellent way to do it.

★★★★★

HomeSite 4

Price *£71.25*

Pros *Excellent selection of HTML tools, good help files*

Cons *Limited WYSIWYG editing*

Contact *Allaire*

Phone *(01638) 569 600*

www.allaire.com

Web editors for beginners compared

Program	Publisher	Price	Templates	Clip art	HTML code editing	WYSIWYG editing	Tables	Frames	Forms	Style sheets	Preview in browser	Rating
Frontpage Express	Microsoft	£0.00	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	★★★★
PageMill	Adobe	£92.83	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★
HomeSite	Allaire	£71.25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★
HotDog Junior	Sausage	£23.50	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	★★★
CoffeeCup	CoffeeCup	£20.00	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	★★★★
WebExpress	MicroVision	£57.58	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★

Conclusion: which is the best?

The Web design programs in this labs test have an interesting mix of approaches, from HomeSite's HTML editor to the WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editor used by HotDog Junior and WebExpress. In terms of value, you can't beat Microsoft's FrontPage, because it comes free with Internet Explorer 5. This software will take you several hours to download from the Net. But you don't need to worry about that – IE5 is on our free cover CD.

HomeSite is probably the best option for beginners, because it encourages you to think about how HTML works, which is useful if you want to progress in Web design.

If you just want to create pages without worrying about HTML, your best bet is CoffeeCup's WebExpress. It simplifies the process of making Web pages. HotDog Junior does a similar job, and at only £20, these editors are worth buying -- even if you think you'll move on to a more sophisticated program.

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tel: 01865 321003 fax: 01865321005

Beat the January blues with Centreshop's Virtual Shopathon!

Want to shop 'till you drop but can't face the January crush? Well look no further, fellow shoppers, for salvation is here!

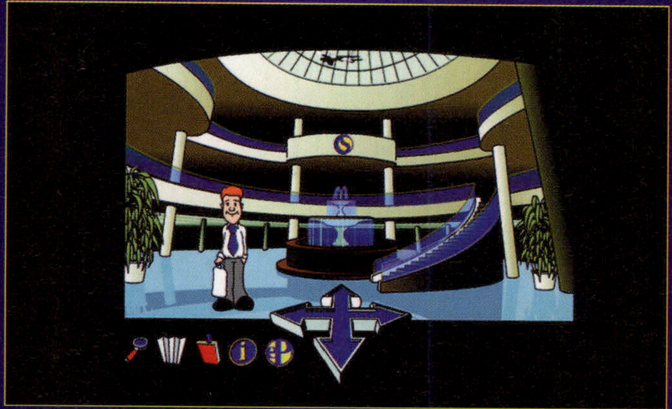
Centreshop (www.centreshop.com), the UK's ultimate interactlive, 3D shopping experience, has opened its doors to the online community!

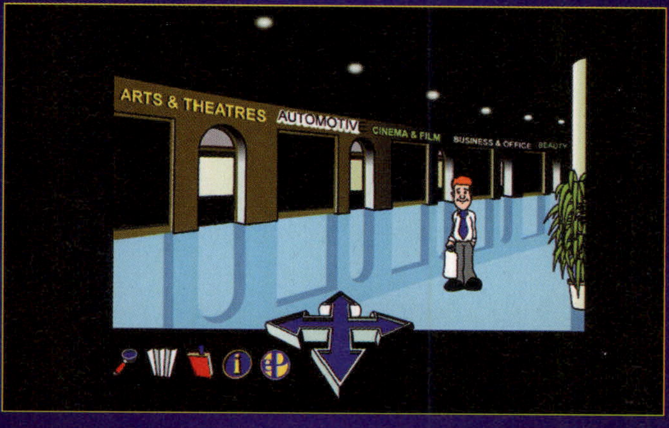
Created by NetBanx Ltd, the UK's leading online payment solution provider, Centreshop offers a huge selection of online shopping sites. With over 1,000 sites to choose from, Centreshop sells everything from fashion, toiletries computer products, tickets and electrical goods to CD's, toys, cars and even balloon rides!

Using the NetBanx payment system, all the shops at Centreshop are safe and secure and the shopping mall also offers a unique loyalty scheme, ePOINTS. You earn these with every purchase you make in the mall and can spend them on a wide choice of quality consumables on offer from the ePOINTS online catalogue.

To celebrate the recent launch of Centreshop, NetBanx Ltd, is offering one lucky *Internet Magazine* reader a fantastic £500 virtual shopping spree within the Centreshop mall. The winning reader may select goodies – ranging from high street brands to more unusual products – from any of the mall's 1,000 online stores, and NetBanx will foot the bill.

CENTRE SHOP





For a chance of winning this great shopping bonanza, all you have to do is answer the following question:

Name three high street brands found in the Centreshop mall

Simply put your answers on a postcard and send it to us by 28 January 2000, at

Centreshop Competition
Internet Magazine
Angel House
338-346 Goswell Road
London
EC1V 7QP

Good luck! And if you are unlucky this time, but require information on any of NetBanx' services (including Centreshop) please call the NetBanx sales team on (01223) 845 594.

There are no cash alternatives. This competition closes on 28 January, 2000. Employees of EMAP Publishing, Netbanx Ltd, and Midnight Communications are not eligible to enter. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

CENTRE SHOP

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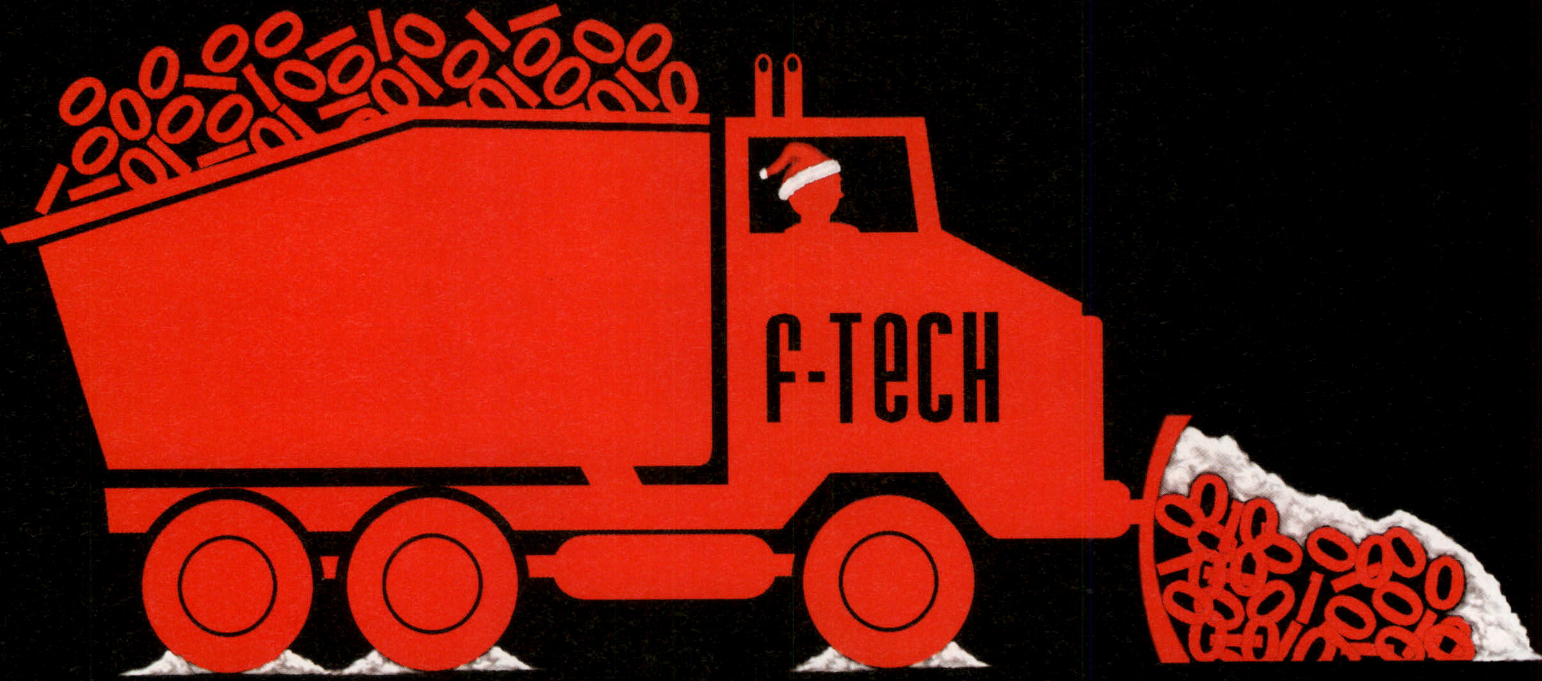

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NewProducts January

This month, we review a Web editor for ASP sites, a utility that'll make sure you never miss another call, a style sheet creator and network security programs

DATA DRIVEN WEB PAGE BUILDER

Drumbeat 2000

A professional package for building active server page sites

January 2000 internet magazine Best Buy

Drumbeat 2000 is Macromedia's latest acquisition, reflecting a degree of diversification from its traditional graphic-related software for the Web. It's a package for constructing data-driven Web sites based around Microsoft's ASP (Active Server Page) technology.

Drumbeat is a complex and powerful package, but it has plenty of documentation and tutorial guides. These cover the program's capabilities and let you appreciate the potential of ASP in e-commerce.

The Quick Start guide has six exercises for constructing an employment database. These cover the basics, such as general design and layout, including mouseovers, template definition and browser compatibility. Each lesson covers aspects of ASP in building database -related Web pages. They help you define the types of interaction between your site and the database.

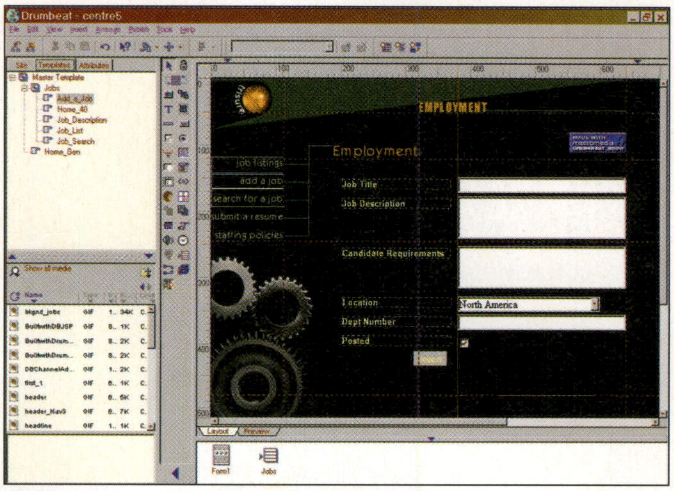
Tackling templates

Drumbeat constructs a content table from this information, which is displayed in a pull-down window – this helps when you're making templates for handling queries, results and searches. You start by designing page templates. You'll also have to design the layout for the processed data (from queries) on these pages. This means you won't need to rebuild your entire site if you need to change the requirements of your database.

Formatting template and page content is easy, since Drumbeat lets you define styles. These are held in the Asset Centre, where you can apply asset files drag and drop. The Asset Centre is a global storage are for adding anything to your site – images, audio and visual plug-ins, text styles, code 'contracts', JavaScript and applets, as well as functional elements, such as downloading browser releases.

A Site Manager sits above the Asset Centre and lets you view the site structure. The templates and the pages can also be found here, along with editable attribute fields on any particular element that you highlight in the workspace.

Above the workspace is the Attic – where available scripts (such as The New English Macromedia Dictionary) and interactions are stored. This is where scripts can be configured and applied to items in the workspace. The Basement (no surprises where this is) contains information on workspace elements which aren't visible yet, but require editing, such as record sets, timers and cookies. A further palette – a SmartElement toolbar – sits between the Asset Centre and the workspace where drag and drop elements, such as a text box or an image map, can be brought into the workspace. All you have to do now is highlight the element and define its attributes using the Attributes box, the Asset Centre and functions located in the Basement.



If you're planning an ASP-driven site, Drumbeat's for you

It's got the lot

Drumbeat seems like a complete package. It has a vast collection of useful tools to develop your Web site, all of which you can customise. Laying out a Web page or template is simple, with drag and drop editing techniques. Designing a site was easy, though your eyes might blur at the logic behind constructing data forms for editing your database. Since many ASP scripts only work on version 4 browsers (or above), Drumbeat has a funky function called Smartpages. This'll convert a page into a browser-specific Web page. The site will be republished with necessary Smartpages incorporated into the site structure.

In addition to the main package, the CD contains Microsoft's Personal Web Server and Chili!Soft Network software. You'll need one of these to publish your pages. The code contract lets you write and store scripts – as long as you've got a knowledge of ASPs – adding to those supplied in the Scripts Editor. The documentation includes an e-commerce user guide full of tips on issues like secure data transfer for credit cards. The guide takes up where the Quick Start guide ends and tells you how to build an online book warehouse with login pages, a search page and a shopping trolley for orders. Additional support beyond the guides and manuals can be found at **www.macromedia.com /support/drumbeat**.

Easy as ASP

Drumbeat is an exceptional package. If you want to develop ASP-based Web sites, this is one of the best places to start. You won't need a detailed understanding of ASP to get started – you get sufficient transparency into the workings of Active Server Pages, the documentation is good and the Quick Start guides are practical.

If you're a Web developer designing data-driven Web sites, this package is worth considering. But if you want to make the most of ASP and Drumbeat be warned – the software and tutorials make a big difference, but there's a huge amount to learn. Remember that ASP isn't the only technology for data interrogation, and your customers will be restricted by the support provided by their ISP – many don't support Active Server Pages and reports suggest their use on the Web has started to decrease.

Drumbeat ships in three versions, all Windows. Drumbeat eASP is a cut-down version of the e-commerce edition reviewed here (it doesn't support developing e-commerce sites). Macromedia claims the JSP edition is the fastest way to build Web applications and interfaces on existing apps powered by Java Server Pages. It has all the capabilities of Drumbeat 2000 ASP, with drag and drop support for JavaBeans and JSP objects.

As with all Macromedia products, there's a 30-day trial available from its site, so give it a try.

Charlie Young

★★★★★

Drumbeat 2000

Price *eASP £387, ASP £301, JSP £268 (all ex VAT)*

Pros *Comprehensive and thorough package*

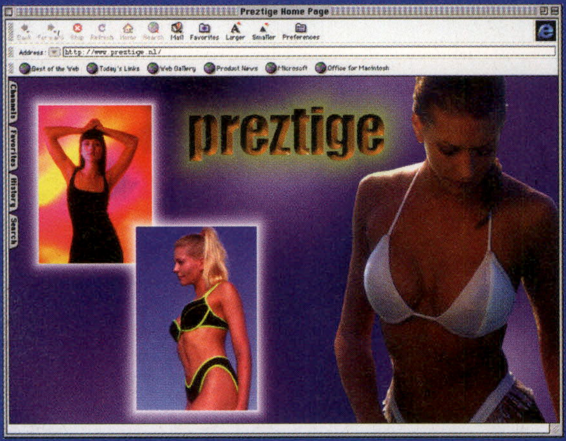
Cons *Not to be bought on a whim, this is specific software for the professional*

Contact *Management Software Ltd*

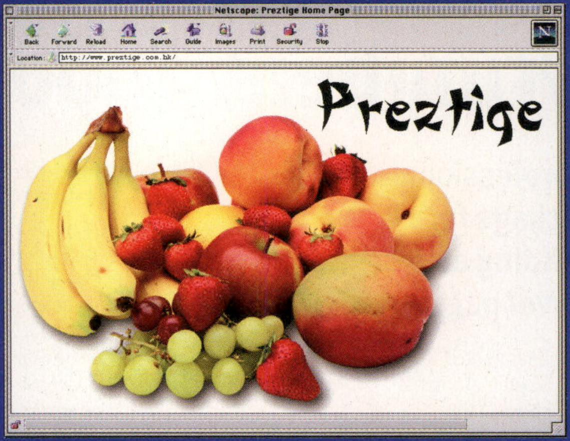
Phone *(0171) 731 9201*

www.macromedia.com

And you thought it was *your* company name.


Preztige Home Page
preztige

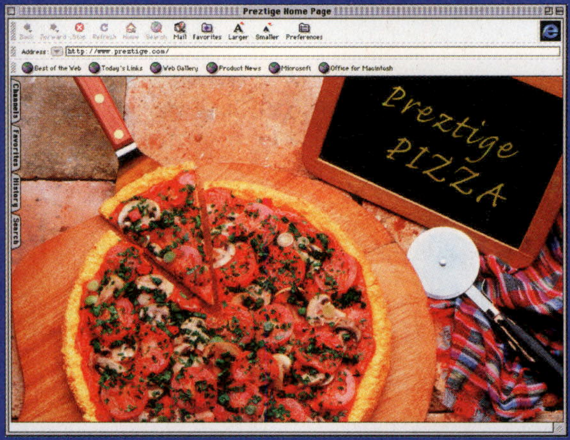
www.preztige.nl
(ADULT ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES, AMSTERDAM)


Netscape: Preztige Home Page
Preztige

www.preztige.com.hk
(FRUIT WHOLESALERS, HONG KONG)

Netscape: Preztige Home Page
Preztige

www.preztige.co.uk
(INSURANCE BROKERS, LONDON)


Preztige Home Page
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www.preztige.com
(PIZZA COMPANY, WASHINGTON DC)

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PHONE MANAGEMENT UTILITY

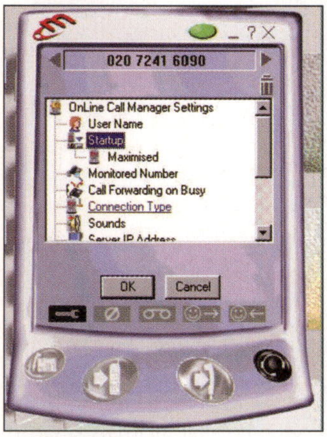
ON THE CD

OnLine Call Manager

Deal with your incoming calls while you're on the Internet

Trying to get through to the home number of Gail Robinson, former editor of *Internet Magazine*, is a nightmare – it's always engaged. Why? Because she spends hours on the Internet. And with more ISPs offering free access, this'll become a common problem. You can use the callback facility on your phone, but sometimes you need to speak to the person there and then. You could use BT's Callminder facility to act as an answerphone while you're engaged, but this is also less than ideal. Online Call Manager from Witchity might be the answer to many engaged maidens' prayers.

This simple but effective software package bypasses the engaged tone problem via a number of clever features. You need to subscribe to a call diversion service before using the utility, after which, incoming calls are diverted to Wichity's server, which sends you an alert, ICQ-style, saying you have an incoming call (the number is displayed together with the name of your caller, if it's in your OCM address book).


020 7241 6090

OCM lets you get in touch with people whose phones are tied up on the Net

You then have several options – you can disconnect from the Net and take the call, take the call over the Internet, divert it to your voicemail box or another phone number, or play an outgoing message. OCM Alert is another ICQ-style feature – it lets you chat to friends or colleagues running OnLine Call Manager on their PCs. Another option is to divert all your calls, even when you're not online, or send them straight to your voicemail box. Alternatively, OCM will monitor another phone, such as your home phone, while you're at the office, which is neat. You can even check who's called you if you're out of the country.

OnLine Call Manager is a free 2.5Mb download from the OCM Web site. You can arrange, online, for call diversion to be set up for your BT phone, which is convenient, though not the fastest service. OCM's interface is tidy, but its stability is suspect – our copy kept crashing. At the time of writing, it was also being regularly updated on the OCM Web site.

So what's the catch? The software's free, but call diversion isn't – you pay a premium rate for the number your incoming calls are diverted to. From BT, call diversion costs £7 per quarter, and redirected calls are charged at 10p a minute. That's more expensive than normal phone rates, but not outrageously so, given that the duration of most redirected calls should be less than a minute. Hotline support isn't free either. But for small businesses and browsing households, the flexible OnLine Call Manager will come in useful.

Roger Gann

★★★★☆

OnLine Call Manager

Price *Free, but call surcharge applies*
Pros *Clever solution to a perennial problem, and flexible*
Cons *Software isn't entirely stable yet, some hidden costs*
Contact *The Witchity Corporation*
Phone *(020) 7903 0400*
www.ocm.uk.com

STYLE SHEET CREATOR

StyleMaster 1.5

Create your own Cascading Style Sheets with this point and click program

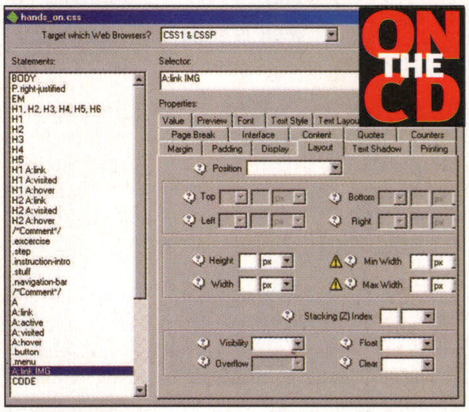
StyleMaster isn't an HTML editor – it's designed purely for creating Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It's designed to work alongside a Web design program. But StyleMaster is one of the few programs that supports the new CSS level 2 standard, which adds a host of new options.

The program simplifies the process of creating CSS – it's just a question of point and click. All the categories are divided up into relevant sections such as Text Style and Text Layout, so finding the option you want to specify is easy. You create a series of statements (each of which redefines a particular HTML tag or other CSS component) and StyleMaster exports them into a CSS file.

Integrating this into your existing pages is easy – all it requires is one line of HTML. StyleMaster doesn't integrate directly into the HTML program – you have to create the CSS and import them into the pages. Some programs such as Dreamweaver let you import or reference external CSS. This approach is a bit of a pain, but it encourages you to think about your design before you start, by deciding which fonts to use, for instance. Different HTML programs will understand different amounts of CSS, depending on the versions they support – some don't understand CSS at all. If this is the case, you won't see the effect of the CSS you've created until you preview your pages in a Web browser.

Unfortunately, the same problem applies to StyleMaster. The preview of the style you've created isn't always accurate – the program doesn't show you things like underlined text or many of the font handling capabilities of CSS version 2. This means you have to preview the CSS in a browser every time you change something and want to see how it looks.

But this does highlight one of the problems with CSS – the browser support is still rather limited – some browsers only understand parts of the standard. StyleMaster lets you target a particular browser type (such as IE4 and 5 or Netscape 3 and above), but all you get is a warning that it could be a problem.


hands_on.css

Target which Web Browsers? CSS1 & CSSP

Statements:
BODY
P.right-justified
EM
H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6
H1
H2
H3
H4
H5
H1 A:link
H1 A:visited
H1 A:hover
H2 A:link
H2 A:visited
H2 A:hover
/*Comment*/
.excercise
.step
.instruction-intro
.stuff
.navigation-bar
/*Comment*/
A
A:link
A:active
A:visited
A:hover
.button
.menu
A:link IMG
CODE

Selector: A:link IMG

StyleMaster lets you create Cascading Style Sheets quickly and easily

Developers Western Civilisation can give you some excellent information on which browsers support which CSS options – have a look on its Web site. It would have been better if this information was built into the program more itself. Ideally, you'd get a preview of how the CSS would appear in several different browsers side by side, or even a more comprehensive preview of how the text will look within the program. At the moment, you have to do this by previewing it in each of the browsers in turn, which is a pain.

There are two versions of StyleMaster – the basic version (which supports CSS1) and the Pro version, which supports the new CSS2 standard.

Richard Baguley

★★★★☆

Stylemaster 1.5

Price *StyleMaster $29.99 (around £20), StyleMaster Pro $49.99 (around £32)*
Pros *A good way to create CSS*
Cons *No direct integration with HTML editors, limited preview abilities*
Contact *Western Civilisation*
www.westciv.com

FIREWALL

GNATBox 3

A fully-featured software-based firewall solution with a modest price tag

There are various types of firewall. Some are all-in-one metal boxes which you simply plug in and use, others cost thousands of pounds.

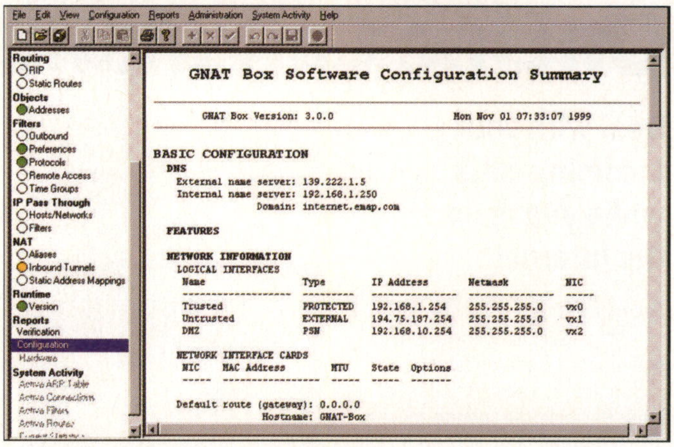
The GNATBox is a software solution with a modest price tag, but it gives you as many features as you need to make your network secure.

As the product is software-only, you need a PC to run it. The system supports a variety of popular hardware, and the software launches from a floppy disk. To make this disk, you use a Windows-based configuration package on your PC. You start with a generic software image, apply the changes you need via the Windows GUI, then tell the package to write the bootable image to the floppy.

While this sounds low-tech, it means you can just swap it if your PC blows up. If you're doing an upgrade or making a lot of changes, you won't have any problems with version control or misconfiguration – simply use another disk. If you get it wrong, just boot from the old disk and your system will work again.

There are various options for managing the GNATBox. A Web-based interface is provided (it's recommended that you change the port number default, which is set at 80), as is a networked management option within the GBAdmin utility – the Windows program you use to create the boot disks.

As you work through the parameters, an indicator beside each one lights up green (OK), yellow (minor problem) or red (major problem). You get a yellow warning, for instance, if you've configured an incoming tunnel with an address that doesn't match any of your interfaces. This is an excellent way of making sure you don't get any problems when you change a parameter – you'll soon know if something breaks.



```
        GNAT Box Software Configuration Summary

     GNAT Box Version: 3.0.0                    Mon Nov 01 07:33:07 1999

BASIC CONFIGURATION
  DNS
    External name server: 139.222.1.5
    Internal name server: 192.168.1.250
                  Domain: internet.emap.com

  FEATURES

  NETWORK INFORMATION
    LOGICAL INTERFACES
     Name                  Type        IP Address        Netmask          NIC
     --------------------  ---------   ---------------   ---------------  -----
     Trusted               PROTECTED   192.168.1.254     255.255.255.0    vx0
     Untrusted             EXTERNAL    194.75.187.254    255.255.255.0    vx1
     DMZ                   PSN         192.168.10.254    255.255.255.0    vx2

    NETWORK INTERFACE CARDS
     NIC    MAC Address          MTU    State  Options
     -----  -----------------    -----  -----  -------

    Default route (gateway): 0.0.0.0
                   Hostname: GNAT-Box
```

The GNATBox 3 configuration package is excellent

New features include support for Gigabit Ethernet cards, improved address representation (you can define objects to represent addresses, rather than having to use IP numbers), and IPsec-compliant virtual private networking (VPN). You have to register to enable all the features, and the minimum RAM spec has gone up – from 8Mb to 16Mb, though 32Mb is preferred.

The GNATBox continues to be a tidy, flexible and usable firewall that costs significantly less than many other products on the market.

David Cartwright
★★★★☆

GNATBox 3

Price *£995*
Platform *You need an Intel-based PC to host the system*
Pros *VPN functionality, good value, excellent configuration package*
Cons *Software solutions are never as fast as hardware*
Contact *GTA*
Phone *(01903) 205 151*
www.globaltech.co.uk

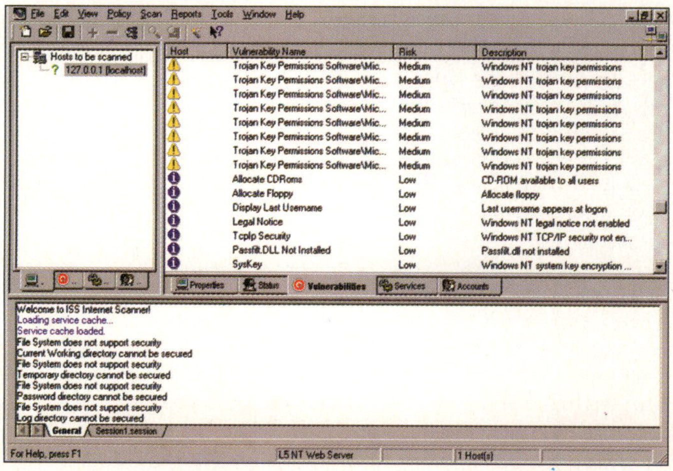
NETWORK SECURITY UTILITY

ISS Internet Scanner 6

Test the security of your network against a range of attacks

You can't simply install a firewall and hope it gives you adequate protection. The only way to be sure you're protected is to probe the network regularly, to show up potential problems. ISS Internet Scanner is an established product in this market. The system can be used with Unix and Windows platforms – we looked at the NT 4 version.

ISS Internet Scanner takes a simple approach – it attacks your network addresses, trying to get in. There's a variety of different attacks, from generic (denial of service) to system-specific (probing known holes in Windows NT). The system has a range of customisable default probe sets. You might want to run a lengthy, full probe once a month and a smaller, faster probe every week.



Host	Vulnerability Name	Risk	Description
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
⚠	Trojan Key Permissions Software\Mic...	Medium	Windows NT trojan key permissions
ℹ	Allocate CDRoms	Low	CD-ROM available to all users
ℹ	Allocate Floppy	Low	Allocate floppy
ℹ	Display Last Username	Low	Last username appears at logon
ℹ	Legal Notice	Low	Windows NT legal notice not enabled
ℹ	Tcplp Security	Low	Windows NT TCP/IP security not en...
ℹ	Passfilt.DLL Not Installed	Low	Passfilt.dll not installed
ℹ	SysKey	Low	Windows NT system key encryption ...

```
Welcome to ISS Internet Scanner!
Loading service cache...
Service cache loaded.
File System does not support security
Current Working directory cannot be secured
File System does not support security
Temporary directory cannot be secured
File System does not support security
Password directory cannot be secured
File System does not support security
Log directory cannot be secured
```

Internet Scanner attacks your system to show up any potential problems

The interface is easy to use – the options are split into manageable sets. Once the probe has been completed, problems are reported by their level of severity, so you can address urgent problems before less urgent issues.

You license Internet Scanner via a key code, which ties it into your specific IP address range. This is an excellent way of making sure the system can't be used to attack other people's machines – if the key code doesn't match the address you're trying to probe, it simply won't work.

Version 6 has a number of new features. The new policy editor is a better way of viewing the world. X-Press Updates lets you auto-update the package via plug-ins, instead of manually. You get some new, more accurate scan sets aimed at specific operating systems and better support for scanning database servers. There are also new vulnerability checks for recently discovered issues. If you already own a copy of ISS Scanner 5.x, you can get upgrade without dumping existing customised probe sets.

ISS Internet Scanner has been a excellent product since its inception, and it does an extremely good job. You can get DIY (CyberCop Scanner from Network Associates) and service-based alternatives (from the Netcraft and NTA Monitor), but ISS compares well with these solutions.

David Cartwright
★★★★☆

ISS Internet Scanner 6

Price *£840 for 10 IP addresses, £4,535 for 100 IP addresses, £16,750 for 1,000 IP addresses (ex VAT)*
Pros *Wide variety of probes, updated regularly, limited only to licensed addresses*
Cons *Pricing gets steep as the number of addresses increases*
Contact *ISS*
Phone *(0118) 959 3800*
www.iss.net

CENTRE SHOP
NETBANX

Unlocking the Doors to CentreShop

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EXCLUSIVE

provider lab

The biggest and best tests // Don't choose an ISP until you've read the results

Find out how the UK's top service providers score in *Internet Magazine*'s exclusive ISP lab tests. Every month we put the best ISPs through a rigorous set of performance tests, so check out how yours has scored. And for the most consistent ISP over the past six months, turn to page 143

January 2000
internet magazine
ISP of the Month
UNINET

The winner

Uninet Internet Services has been steadily climbing up the rankings over the past few months, and has finally taken top spot. The company's performance is extremely good in all areas, but it's curious to see that the one area where it's head and shoulders above its competitors is European connection speeds.

Datanet, in second place, and Ace Internet, in third, have also performed well in all regions, with Datanet doing especially well in the US, and Ace Internet managing a good UK figure.

Fourth and fifth go to two of this month's strongest chart-climbers. Nildram has risen from 59th place to fourth. Icom-Web – the highest climber of the month – was in 69th place last month and is now fifth.

There isn't much separating the performance of the rest of the companies in the top quarter of the table. The difference in performance between first and third position is around 2.5 per cent this month – unusually large. But it's also the same difference that separates the companies at fourth and fifteenth.

Between 21st and 25th are five companies with excellent US download speeds but poor availability. These include ENTANET and Viper (both on the same network) and Cable and Wireless Internet and Cable and Wireless Internet Lite (which also share network resources).

There are three new entrants this month. News International's Bun arrives highest at 39th. Netscape Online takes position 46, and NetDirect Online manages 69th.

It's a mediocre month for free ISPs. Icom-web is the standard-bearer in fifth place, and Cable and Wireless Lite is in decent form at 24th, but the top of the table is dominated by subscription ISPs.

Down at the bottom of the ranking table we've got pretty much the same companies as last month. Baynet and Enterprise are at ground level in 112th and 111th place, and Screaming.net is barely a millimetre off the floor at 109th. All these companies were let down by their poor availability figures.

The only ISP tests that count

The *Internet Magazine* ISP tests are based on proven scientific testing principles. We make sure we connect to each ISP many times – which means we make thousands of calls.

The results produced by this extensive testing are then processed, resulting in the test analysis and ranking figures you see in these pages. At every stage, the results are checked to make sure they're accurate.

Please remember that these tests are only designed to examine the availability and speed of an ISP – we don't test their prices or technical support. For the lowdown on the complete set of services provided by the top 30 ISPs, you can get hold of our gigantic ISP of the Year feature from our Faxback service on page 181.

How we test

Our testing machines hold a list of ISPs to test. The system selects four Web sites and tests the download speed for each ISP on the list. When it reaches the bottom of the list, it picks four more sites and starts at the top again.

There are 20 sites on our test list, six from the UK, 11 from the US, and three from continental Europe. These numbers are similar to the weightings we give the different regions when we calculate the final results.

We look for pages that are unlikely to change over the test period – pages with CGI or adverts are unsuitable. Government and academic sites are often used because their pages are more stable. If a site changes in the middle of a test, we ignore the data and don't include it in the results.

Choosing test sites in the UK is a particular problem because the majority of sites here are hosted by ISPs and their close associates, and it wouldn't be fair to allow an ISP to be tested on its own sites. Because of this we have to choose UK sites carefully and use Traceroute to check who hosts them. We've chosen sites from different areas of the country. Most are academic sites.

In the US the situation is easier, since there are more hosts and many of them aren't closely associated with UK ISPs. We choose sites hosted on the East Coast, the West Coast, and in the country's heartland. For our continental sites we chose one in France, one in Germany, and one in Scandinavia.

We usually change at least one site a month because it's become unsuitable or unreliable. This means you have to be careful when comparing the download speeds for different months since the sites tested might not be the same.

Uppers&downers

ICOM-WEB

↑ A tremendous leap of 64 places from 69th position to fifth makes this ISP the top free provider this month.

AVIATORS NETWORK

↑ Rises 62 places from close to the bottom of the table at 95th to a respectable 33rd.

ZOO INTERNET

↑ An old dial up number was responsible for this company's poor performance in recent months. Under the new number it's climbed half way up the table from 109th to 49th.

FORCE 9

↓ Force 9 managed a fine 15th place in December, but this month it has slipped down 62 places to 77th.

FREE ONLINE

↓ A similar fall, losing 56 places in a tumble from 17th to 73rd.

For more information on ISPs, visit our newly revamped Web site at www.internet-magazine.com /resource/isp

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This month's best-performing ISPs, as tested in *Internet Magazine*'s labs

This Month	Last Month	ISP Name	Telephone	Availability (%)	Overall average Web speed (seconds)	Average UK Web sites (seconds)	Average US Web sites (seconds)	Average European sites (seconds)
1	8	Uninet Internet Services	(0800) 783 7499	100.00	11.66	10.49	11.71	14.87
2	5	Datanet	(01252) 810 081	98.00	11.61	10.37	11.50	16.01
3	11	Ace Internet	(0705) 066 7423	100.00	11.94	9.73	12.28	16.57
4	59	Nildram	(0800) 496 2903	100.00	12.25	10.34	12.05	19.16
5	69	Icom-Web	(0800) 731 841	93.33	11.47	9.62	11.66	15.91
6	22	Netkonect	(0171) 345 7777	98.97	12.23	10.45	12.33	16.99
7	37	Pinnacle Internet	(01903) 524 999	97.97	12.14	10.67	11.22	22.10
8	44	Freedom To Surf	(0181) 881 2111	98.97	12.28	10.84	12.04	17.98
9	19	London Web Communications	(0800) 026 8306	98.00	12.17	10.27	12.18	17.82
10	1	Newnet	(07000) 639 638	99.42	12.35	10.40	12.60	16.75
11	21	CableNet	(0800) 195 8888	100.00	12.52	9.97	12.79	18.54
12	51	Strongnet	(01703) 866 006	100.00	12.52	10.03	12.93	17.53
13	27	Internet for Business	(01224) 333 370	100.00	12.54	10.07	12.64	19.43
14	4	CompuServe	(0990) 000 200	100.00	12.55	10.92	12.54	17.49
15	14	Gemsoft	(0114) 275 7070	100.00	12.56	10.84	12.73	16.75
16	42	U-Net	(01925) 484 444	98.97	12.46	9.39	13.35	16.37
17	10	Global Internet	(0870) 909 8041	100.00	12.62	10.54	13.24	15.18
18	25	UUNet (Pipex Dial)	(0500) 567 000	95.09	12.06	10.83	11.73	17.79
19	46	Wyenet	(01989) 762 476	98.98	12.57	10.49	12.88	16.90
20	12	VAS-NET	(0800) 389 0070	100.00	12.70	11.32	12.92	15.51
21	48	Viper	(07050) 345071	95.14	12.09	9.41	12.91	15.24
22	2	Connecting Business	(0870) 870 1100	92.97	11.83	9.11	12.06	18.63
23	32	ENTANET	(0500) 368 263	92.45	11.78	9.84	12.12	15.59
24	3	Cable & Wireless Lite	(0800) 092 3001	98.97	12.68	9.99	13.07	18.43
25	9	Cable & Wireless Internet	(0800) 092 3013	97.00	12.43	9.94	13.08	16.06
26	62	Cheapnet	(0990) 168 160	100.00	12.85	11.51	12.83	16.96
27	24	Direct Net @ccess	(01232) 201 555	93.26	12.08	10.16	12.34	16.31
28	26	DIALNet Connect	(0800) 881 881	100.00	12.96	10.86	12.95	19.31
29	43	Portland communications	(0181) 942 1115	100.00	12.97	11.32	13.08	17.21
30	18	Direct Connection	(0800) 072 0000	95.14	12.39	10.96	12.19	17.88
31	53	Pavilion Internet	(01273) 607 072	100.00	13.20	11.12	13.64	16.77
32	60	Cerbernet	(0171) 360 8000	98.98	13.10	11.33	12.73	20.60
33	95	Aviators Network	(0700) 284 2867	95.14	12.64	11.05	12.43	18.66
34	13	Interalpha	(01703) 363 200	98.48	13.23	10.23	13.87	18.40
35	79	REDNET	(01494) 513 333	96.03	12.93	11.17	13.30	16.05
36	72	Paradise Internet	(01256) 414 863	100.00	13.47	10.08	14.37	18.28
37	87	Swift Internet	(0845) 6060210	96.07	13.05	10.21	14.06	15.49
38	70	ICM Netserv	(0800) 614 581	100.00	13.65	10.63	14.59	17.06
39	-	Bun	(0845) 306 3636	98.00	13.38	11.13	14.09	15.83
40	57	AIC-Entanet	(01279) 306 677	97.02	13.27	10.42	14.16	16.48
41	78	UK2Net	(0171) 538 0253	95.09	13.04	11.86	13.01	16.81
42	80	Cygnet Internet Services	(0181) 880 4650	100.00	13.75	11.28	13.70	21.43
43	35	Abel Gratis	(0131) 445 5555	99.14	13.68	10.62	14.64	17.08
44	68	Primex	(01908) 643 597	97.00	13.43	13.81	12.27	19.31
45	20	inweb	(0845) 606 2014	100.00	13.91	11.55	14.03	20.28
46	-	Netscape Online		89.81	12.50	10.84	12.66	16.52
47	90	Frontier Internet Services	(0171) 536 9090	100.00	13.94	13.01	13.59	18.83
48	23	Power Internet	(01908) 605 188	97.97	13.68	12.03	13.32	20.84
49	109	Zoo Internet	(0181) 961 7000	92.38	12.91	10.61	13.15	18.33
50	31	NetDirect Internet	(0800) 731 3311	95.09	13.32	11.02	13.59	18.61
51	81	I-Way Soho	(0171) 734 5734	100.00	14.10	14.86	12.86	19.32

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This month's best-performing ISPs, as tested in *Internet Magazine*'s labs

🟦 Free 🟩 Subscription 🟪 Business

This Month	Last Month	ISP Name	Telephone	Availability (%)	Overall average Web speed (seconds)	Average UK Web sites (seconds)	Average US Web sites (seconds)	Average European sites (seconds)
52	75	Legend Internet	(01274) 743 500	97.05	13.71	10.71	14.36	18.80
53	67	WorldWide Web Services	(01784) 898 800	92.38	13.10	9.80	13.86	18.46
54	58	SoftProg NET	(0181) 788 0656	97.97	13.94	12.89	13.92	17.23
55	6	Internet UK	(0845) 070 0006	92.38	13.17	10.35	13.57	19.22
56	7	Sonnet Internet	(0171) 891 2000	96.03	13.69	10.83	14.32	18.54
57	33	FDD	(01865) 321003	100.00	14.27	11.38	15.15	17.63
58	84	DNA Internet Services	(01604) 670 717	95.09	13.58	10.67	13.90	20.44
59	41	HiWay	(01635) 573 300	92.38	13.23	11.65	12.96	19.57
60	82	Netcom Internet	(0800) 980 9107	95.04	13.81	10.78	14.04	21.54
61	28	The Internet Business	(01232) 424 190	100.00	14.56	10.93	15.82	17.87
62	91	Wave Rider Internet	(0121) 603 3888	94.17	13.73	9.88	15.06	17.33
63	29	Mistral Internet	(0800) 328 7253	94.17	13.76	10.82	14.78	16.49
64	40	CIX	(0181) 255 5151	97.00	14.18	11.99	14.32	19.93
65	50	CommUnity Internet	(01865) 856 000	100.00	14.63	12.23	15.23	18.25
66	30	Zen Internet	(01706) 713 714	100.00	14.67	13.01	14.53	20.52
67	88	Eclipse Networking	01392 202 345	98.97	14.55	11.70	15.20	19.18
68	86	Interactive Web	(01926) 450 099	96.11	14.16	14.25	13.70	16.65
69	-	NetDirect Online	(0800) 731 3311	100.00	14.78	11.71	15.52	19.57
70	34	Freeserve	(0990) 500 049	94.17	13.93	10.65	13.62	25.56
71	16	Which?-Online	(0645) 830 240	97.97	14.50	10.36	15.67	19.89
72	49	TIA NET	(0800) 092 6070	97.97	14.54	11.99	15.04	19.16
73	17	Free-Online	(0870) 706 0504	100.00	14.85	13.77	13.98	23.35
74	47	Prestel Online	(0990) 223 300	97.97	14.56	11.42	15.71	17.10
75	54	Intonet	(0181) 941 9195	96.03	14.33	11.88	15.10	17.06
76	93	Plugin	(0800) 783 9250	92.28	13.80	13.80	13.37	16.44
77	15	Force 9	(0800) 073 7800	100.00	15.05	12.65	15.43	19.94
78	55	Telinco Internet Services	(0800) 542 0800	98.97	14.93	12.83	15.34	18.76
79	66	Freebeeb	(09066) 500 600	97.97	14.78	11.71	15.52	19.57
80	38	Virgin Net	(0500) 558 800	98.97	15.13	12.17	15.47	21.94
81	39	Madasafish	(09010) 222324	100.00	15.33	13.38	15.59	19.61
82	92	Firstnet	(0113) 294 4224	100.00	15.34	13.60	14.96	22.87
83	36	Avante Internet	(01283) 545 000	98.98	15.22	11.86	16.13	19.84
84	98	btclick.com	(0800) 731 7887	100.00	15.63	12.12	16.43	21.30
85	52	BT Internet	(0800) 800 001	96.07	15.09	12.96	15.19	20.91
86	45	Demon	(0181) 371 1234	100.00	15.75	12.87	16.89	17.61
87	71	Moonlight	(01276) 856 868	90.65	14.35	11.97	14.60	19.94
88	64	Gifford Internet Services	(0845) 111 0032	92.38	14.84	16.55	13.42	18.20
89	89	Cable Internet	(0500) 500 100	93.33	15.00	12.24	15.35	21.20
90	61	Breathe	(0800) 298 3030	86.72	13.97	11.67	14.14	19.86
91	97	Ideal Internet services	(01942) 522 333	89.81	14.52	10.96	15.30	20.59
92	96	conX	(08707) 410 510	96.07	15.58	12.63	15.97	22.12
93	104	Newbury Internet	(01635) 569 123	95.09	15.43	11.54	17.02	17.52
94	77	ClaraNet	(0800) 358 2828	90.74	14.78	12.77	15.33	17.51
95	65	Easynet	(0171) 681 4444	79.03	12.98	10.63	13.38	17.64
96	103	Vossnet	(01753) 737 800	96.03	15.82	15.13	15.87	17.61
97	101	CYBERphile Internet	(01543) 454 840	98.98	16.68	13.97	16.85	23.74
98	85	Technocom	(0845) 333 3000	78.22	13.22	10.66	13.64	18.42
99	56	UK Online	(0845) 333 4567	77.60	13.19	10.39	13.28	21.04
100	105	IPNet		96.07	16.45	13.82	16.70	22.86
101	73	Poptel	(0171) 923 9465	90.65	15.76	16.67	14.83	18.57
102	76	SAQ Internet	(0870) 737 7700	97.97	17.47	17.55	16.69	21.99
103	94	UKPeople	(0800) 542 5200	98.98	18.01	13.79	19.82	19.76
104	83	FreeUK	(0900) 900 0900	79.67	14.53	12.20	14.96	18.95
105	99	Pipemedia OnLine	(01455) 828 218	100.00	18.35	14.81	19.36	22.95
106	74	Onyx	(0345) 715 715	97.00	17.91	18.09	16.97	23.04
107	63	LineOne	(0906) 302 0100	86.72	16.49	12.01	17.82	21.88
108	106	Discovery	(01203) 364 400	93.26	18.99	20.61	17.35	23.98
109	110	Screaming.net (BT line)	(0800) 376 5262	76.56	15.82	13.23	15.91	23.08
110	102	WSS Internet Access	(01793) 420 764	98.97	21.64	18.57	22.27	27.00
111	107	Enterprise	(01624) 677 666	83.62	21.70	20.22	20.83	31.37
112	108	Baynet	(01222) 256 401	66.43	19.72	12.93	22.65	22.49

How the performance tests work

The *Internet Magazine* provider labs tests are designed to give you all the information you need on the speed and availability of ISPs. Every month, our system accesses each of the ISPs on the list many times. Our system repeatedly checks:

● The availability of the ISP. How easy is it to make the connection? How often are the ISP's modems engaged?

● The speed of the connection. How long do a number of popular Web pages take to download?

To rank the ISPs, we calculate the geometric mean of the availability and average Web performance.

● This month's tests ran over the period 1-18 November 1999.

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How the ISPs performed over the past six months

Find out how your service provider has done in our unique chart...

🟦 Free 🟩 Subscription 🟪 Business

	Provider	Phone	URL
1 🟩	Uninet Internet Services	(0800) 783 7499	www.uninet.co.uk
2 🟩	Cable & Wireless Internet	(0800) 092 3013	www.cwcom.net
3 🟩	Internet UK	(0845) 070 0006	sales@internet-uk.net
4 🟩	UUNet (Pipex Dial)	(0500) 567 000	www.uk.uu.net
5 🟩	ENTANET	(0500) 368 263	www.enta.net
6 🟦	Cable & Wireless Lite	(0800) 092 3001	www.cwcom.net
7 🟩	Datanet	(01252) 810 081	www.data.net.uk
8 🟪	Internet for Business	(01224) 333 370	www.ifb.net
9 🟩	Newnet	(07000) 639 638	www.newnet.co.uk/home
10 🟩	CompuServe	(0990) 000 200	www.compuserve.co.uk
11 🟪	Ace Internet	(0705) 066 7423	www.ace-internet.co.uk
12 🟩	Pinnacle Internet	(01903) 524 999	www.pncl.co.uk
13 🟩	DIALNet Connect	(0800) 881 881	www.dialnet.com
14 🟩	U-Net	(01925) 484 444	www.u-net.net
15 🟩	Global Internet	(0870) 909 8041	www.global.net.uk
16 🟩	Gemsoft	(0114) 275 7070	www.gemsoft.net
17 🟩	Netkonect	(0171) 345 7777	www.netkonect.co.uk
18 🟪	Mistral Internet	(0800) 328 7253	www.mistral-uk.net
19 🟩	inweb	(0845) 606 2014	www.inweb.net.uk
20 🟩	Direct Connection	(0800) 072 0000	www.dircon.net
21 🟩	Sonnet Internet	(0171) 891 2000	www.sonnet.co.uk
22 🟩	NetDirect Internet	(0800) 731 3311	www.netdirect.net.uk
23 🟩	Nildram	(0800) 496 2903	www.nildram.net
24 🟩	Pavilion Internet	(01273) 607 072	www.pavilion.co.uk
25 🟩	Cheapnet	(0990) 168 160	www.cheapnet.co.uk
26 🟪	REDNET	(01494) 513 333	www.red.net
27 🟩	Viper	(07050) 345071	www.viper.co.uk
28 🟩	SoftProg NET	(0181) 788 0656	www.softprog.net
29 🟩	Which?-Online	(0645) 830 240	www.which.net
30 🟩	Freedom To Surf	(0181) 881 2111	www.freedom2surf.net
31 🟩	Primex	(01908) 643 597	www.primex.co.uk
32 🟩	Power Internet	(01908) 605 188	www.powernet.co.uk
33 🟪	London Web Communications	(0800) 026 8306	www.londonweb.net
34 🟩	Direct Net @ccess	(01232) 201 555	www.d-n-a.net
35 🟩	Intonet	(0181) 941 9195	www.intonet.co.uk
36 🟩	CableNet	(0800) 195 8888	www.cablenet.net
37 🟩	CommUnity Internet	(01865) 856 000	www.community.net.uk
38 🟪	Cerbernet	(0171) 360 8000	www.cerbernet.net
39 🟩	HiWay	(01635) 573 300	www.hiway.co.uk
40 🟦	Virgin Net	(0500) 558 800	www.virgin.net
41 🟪	The Internet Business	(01232) 424 190	www.tibus.net
42 🟦	UK Online	(0845) 333 4567	www.ukonline.net
43 🟩	AIC-Entanet	(01279) 306 677	www.aic.co.uk
44 🟩	Interalpha	(01703) 363 200	www.interalpha.net
45 🟩	Interactive Web	(01926) 450 099	www.wwwuk.net
46 🟩	Swift Internet	(0845) 6060210	www.swiftinter.net
47 🟩	Demon	(0181) 371 1234	www.demon.net
48 🟩	Cygnet Internet Services	(0181) 880 4650	www.cygnet.co.uk
49 🟦	Freeserve	(0990) 500 049	www.freeserve.net
50 🟩	Legend Internet	(01274) 743 500	www.legend.co.uk
51 🟩	Easynet	(0171) 681 4444	www.easynet.co.uk
52 🟩	Portland communications	(0181) 942 1115	www.portland.co.uk
53 🟩	BT Internet	(0800) 800 001	www.btinternet.com
54 🟪	ICM Netserv	(0800) 614 581	www.netserv.net
55 🟩	Frontier Internet Services	(0171) 536 9090	www.ftech.co.uk
56 🟩	Paradise Internet	(01256) 414 863	www.pins.co.uk
57 🟩	WorldWide Web Services	(01784) 898 800	www.webs.co.uk
58 🟩	Onyx	(0345) 715 715	www.onyxnet.co.uk
59 🟦	Free-Online	(0870) 706 0504	www.free-online.net
60 🟩	UK2Net	(0171) 538 0253	www.uk2net.com
61 🟩	ClaraNet	(0800) 358 2828	www.clara.net
62 🟩	Prestel Online	(0990) 223 300	www.prestel.co.uk
63 🟩	DNA Internet Services	(01604) 670 717	www.dna-is.com
64 🟩	Aviators Network	(0700) 284 2867	www.aviators.net
65 🟦	Telinco Internet Services	(0800) 542 0800	www.telinco.co.uk
66 🟩	TIA NET	(0800) 092 6070	www.tianet.com
67 🟩	SAQ Internet	(0870) 737 7700	www.saqnet.co.uk
68 🟦	Moonlight	(01276) 856 868	www.moon-light.co.uk
69 🟦	LineOne	(0906) 302 0100	www.lineone.net
70 🟩	Eclipse Networking	01392 202 345	www.eclipse.co.uk
71 🟩	Force 9	(0800) 073 7800	www.force9.net
72 🟩	Gifford Internet Services	(0845) 111 0032	www.gifford.co.uk
73 🟩	Ideal Internet services	(01942) 522 333	www.idealnet.co.uk
74 🟩	Netcom Internet	(0800) 980 9107	www.netcom.net.uk
75 🟩	Newbury Internet	(01635) 569 123	www.newbury.net
76 🟦	I-Way Soho	(0171) 734 5734	www.i-way.co.uk
77 🟩	Cable Internet	(0500) 500 100	www.cableinet.co.uk
78 🟩	Vossnet	(01753) 737 800	www.vossnet.co.uk
79 🟦	Abel Gratis	(0131) 445 5555	www.abel.net.uk
80 🟦	btclick.com	(0800) 731 7887	www.btclickfree.com
81 🟩	Pipemedia OnLine	(01455) 828 218	www.pipemedia.co.uk
82 🟩	CYBERphile Internet	(01543) 454 840	www.cyberphile.co.uk
83 🟩	Technocom	(0845) 333 3000	www.technocom.net
84 🟩	Wave Rider Internet	(0121) 603 3888	www.waverider.co.uk
85 🟩	Zoo Internet	(0181) 961 7000	www.zoo.co.uk
86 🟩	Enterprise	(01624) 677 666	www.enterprise.net
87 🟩	Discovery	(01203) 364 400	www.discover.co.uk
88 🟦	Baynet	(01222) 256 401	www.baynet.co.uk
89 🟩	WSS Internet Access	(01793) 420 764	www.WSkiSoft.co.uk

Top performers in the past six months

As well as our normal tests, every month we produce a table showing how the ISPs have performed over the last six months. This is created by averaging the monthly results for availability and Web access speed. The table only includes ISPs that have figured in our monthly tables in every one of the past six months. Some providers aren't included because we only began testing them recently. Others haven't made it because we had problems testing them in at least one of these months. Exclusion from this table is no reflection on the quality of the ISP's service.

The results

This month, 89 providers have qualified for our six-month tests. It's the biggest six-month list we've ever published. Top of the rankings comes Uninet Internet Services, a company that's managed the double this month by topping the regular monthly rankings too. It's a small company based in Watlington, Oxford, with a rather old-fashioned looking Web site, but in this battle of David and many Goliaths, David has won.

Our number two is Cable and Wireless Internet, an ISP that has slowly crept up the rankings over the last few months. Internet UK – last month's winner – comes third. It's a fine month too for the second service from C&W, Cable and Wireless Lite. This free service has climbed to sixth position – yet another indication that free ISPs are coming of age.

The star riser of January is DIALNet Connect, climbing an exceptional 43 places from 58th last month to 13th. Back in July the company had a very poor test result, but now the July result has fallen out of our rolling averages and the DIALNet Connect has shot up the table as a result.

Onyx hasn't fared so well, and has lost 24 places this month, dropping from 34th to 58th. ClaraNet has also suffered, losing 18 places in a fall from 43rd to 61st. The bottom of the table looks similar to our monthly tables, with WSS Internet Access, Baynet, Discovery and Enterprise propping up the order.

Calculations

Each month, as well as adding the new data in from the current monthly tests, we drop the data for the monthly results seven months ago. This removal often has as much influence on the six-month rankings as the addition of the new data – if not more.

To make sure that each month is of roughly equal value, the download speed figures for past months are adjusted using a mathematical formula so they conform to the numerical spreads we get from our current tests. This adjustment allows us to produce a worthwhile average across the six-month period. If you're looking for consistency from your service provider, these are the results to watch.

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hosting lab tests

Find the best home for your site

Each month *Internet Magazine* tests the performance of the best Web hosting companies. With our results, you can make sure your site's getting the best possible care

This month's best performing hosting companies

	Host Name	Host URL	UK Web throughput (kbps)	Availability
1	Nildram	www.nildram.net	1047.67	100.00
2	Inweb Networks	www.inweb.net.uk	960.96	87.13
3	NewNet	www.newnet.co.uk	943.38	93.50
4	VBCnet	www.vbc.net	907.95	99.90
5	Virtual Internet	www.vi.net	815.57	97.68
6	easynet	www.easynet.co.uk	689.04	100.00
7	Demon Internet	www.demon.net	632.43	99.56
8	Wessex Net	www.wessex.net	625.67	99.73
9	Technocom PLC	www.technocom.net	603.93	99.90
10	Direct Connection	www.dircon.net	585.94	99.69
11	Caberfeidh UK Ltd	www.caberfeidh.co.uk	585.63	99.86
12	Frontier Internet Services	www.ftech.co.uk	501.18	100.00
13	Mistral Internet	www.new.mistral.co.uk	486.49	99.45
14	Gemsoft	www.gemsoft.net	486.46	99.97
15	Zeronet	www.zeronet.co.uk	484.34	98.12
16	Paradise Internet Network Services	www.pins.co.uk	444.90	99.38
17	WebWorlds	www.webworlds.co.uk	418.62	98.63
18	Netcom UK	www.netcom.net.uk	413.39	100.00
19	GX Networks	www.gxn.net	398.86	98.53
20	UUNET UK	www.uk.uu.net	364.70	99.39
21	Internet Network Services	www.insnet.net	354.74	99.90
22	FDD	www.fdd.co.uk	349.76	99.83
23	K-web Internet	www.k-web.co.uk	326.18	99.11
24	Netcentric Solutions Ltd	www.netcentric.co.uk	313.12	100.00
25	Egg	www.eggconnect.net	299.22	99.62
26	U-NET	www.u-net.net	295.09	99.56
27	Cybercity Internet	www.cyber-city.co.uk	277.73	100.00
28	Digiserve	www.digiserve.co.uk	273.94	100.00
29	Alkazar Internet	www.alkazar.net	272.77	99.93
30	ClaraNet Ltd	www.clara.net	270.09	98.77
31	Telinco	www.telinco.net	256.35	97.91
32	Jena Internet Services	www.jena.co.uk	255.48	100.00
33	Searley Data Services	www.searley.net	248.61	99.93
34	Quik Internet North East England	www.ne.quik.co.uk	247.61	99.76
35	Netcetera	www.inetc.net	239.55	99.59
36	Hotlinks Internet Services	hotlinks.co.uk	237.58	98.63
37	Net Direct	www.netdirect.net.uk	234.16	99.97
38	PSINet UK Ltd	www.uk.psi.net	228.39	99.83
39	Magic Moments	www.magic-moments.com	226.74	100.00
40	Worldwide Web Services	www.webs.co.uk	197.55	99.28
41	Voyager Internet Uk	www.voyager.net.uk	185.52	99.91
42	NetBenefit	www.netbenefit.co.uk	178.37	99.93
43	.netkonect	www.netkonect.co.uk	175.34	99.66
44	UKIP	www.ukip.co.uk	174.02	96.61
45	Premier internet 2000	www.pi2000.net	172.72	99.93
46	IDnet	www.idnet.net.uk	166.54	99.97
47	York UK Hosting	www.york-uk.com	166.06	98.12
48	Ace Internet	www.ace-internet.co.uk	164.95	99.83
49	Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	159.26	99.11
50	Abel Internet	www.abel.net.uk	158.10	98.46
51	Cherryblue Internet Ltd	www.cherryblue.com	156.94	97.06
52	Research Machines	www.rmplc.co.uk	151.97	99.73
53	Teleregion	www.teleregion.co.uk	149.79	99.52
54	Community internet plc	www.community.co.uk	147.19	98.08
55	Server World	www.serverworld.net	145.94	99.83
56	Exploit Information Technology Ltd	www.exploit.co.uk	145.38	99.73
57	Scotland Online	www.scotland.net	144.44	100.00
58	InstaCities	www.instacities.com	144.12	99.52
59	Kingston Internet	www.kingston-internet.net	143.21	97.36
60	Prestel On-line	www.prestel.co.uk	141.77	100.00
61	Wave Rider Internet	www.waverider.net.uk	140.63	98.80
62	Datanet International	www.data.net.uk	140.41	99.45
63	Corpex	www.corpex.com	140.28	98.29
64	Alcom Internetix	www.alcom.co.uk	140.08	99.93
65	NDCG Online	www.ndcg.co.uk	139.69	97.50
66	London Web	www.londonweb.co.uk	139.34	100.00
67	Trinité	www.trinite.co.uk	138.36	99.97
68	iNetUK	www.inetuk.net	137.39	99.62
69	BT WebWorld	www.btwebworld.co.uk	134.80	98.74
70	Sonnet Internet Ltd	www.sonnet.co.uk	133.45	95.82
71	PLiG	www.plig.net	129.38	100.00
72	Tecc Ltd	www.tecc.co.uk	126.13	99.97
73	STRONGNET	www.strongnet.net	125.14	99.93
74	Charis Internet Services	www.charis.net	123.38	99.93
75	Just Space	www.justspace.com	117.68	99.69
76	Freedom To Surf	www.freedom2surf.net	115.21	99.97
77	OKChicken	www.okchicken.com	112.76	99.83
78	Shellnet	www.shellnet.co.uk	112.71	99.86
79	The Web Factory	www.webfactory.co.uk	105.63	99.93
80	CondorIS.Net	www.condoris.net	103.96	99.90
81	IFB	www.ifb.net	101.51	100.00
82	DomainCity	www.domaincity.co.uk	100.23	99.63
83	V-Host Internet Solutions Ltd	www.vhost.uk.net	97.86	94.25
84	Pavilion Internet	www.pavilion.co.uk	97.85	95.00
85	Cocoon Internet Services	www.cocoon.co.uk	96.44	94.87
86	Church Net UK	www.churchnet.org.uk	95.29	98.94
87	Club24 Internet	www.club24.co.uk	93.48	100.00
88	Cheapnet Ltd	www.cheapnet.co.uk	92.46	98.36
89	Zetnet Internet Service	www.zetnet.co.uk	92.40	99.97
90	Cygnet Internet Solutions	www.cygnet.co.uk	92.31	93.02

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This month's best performing hosting companies

	Host Name	Host URL	UK Web throughput (Kbps)	Availability
91	Atlas Internet	www.atlas.net.uk	91.65	99.35
92	Cerbernet Ltd	www.cerbernet.net	91.32	99.76
93	DSC	www.dsc.net	91.24	77.58
94	I-Way Limited	www.i-way.net.uk	90.81	99.69
95	Triangle Multimedia Limited	www.triangle-multimedia.co.uk	85.86	97.64
96	edNET	www.ednet.co.uk	85.03	99.86
97	Myratech	www.myratech.co.uk	84.90	99.56
98	Soft Options UK	www.softopt.co.uk	82.22	99.86
99	REDNET	www.red.net	81.59	99.93
100	UK Fast Hosting	www.ukfast.co.uk	81.02	94.80
101	East Midlands Network (EMNET)	www.emnet.co.uk	78.44	99.08
102	Plus Net	www.plus.net.uk	78.10	98.63
103	ENTANET	www.enta.net	74.16	99.90
104	Bucks Net	www.bucks.net	73.87	99.42
105	Shared Knowledge	www.sharedknowledge.net	73.06	99.93
106	Netalia Internet	www.netalia.com	72.11	100.00
107	TWF Corporate Solution	www.twf.net	70.58	99.73
108	Internet Central	www.netcentral.co.uk	68.57	99.76
109	Netlink Internet Services	www.netlink.co.uk	66.87	99.86
110	NSL NET	k2.dnet.it	62.03	97.16
111	Onyx Internet	www.onyxnet.co.uk	58.70	99.93
112	Vital Online Ltd	www.vital.co.uk	55.54	99.35
113	Thames Global Internet Services	www.tgis.co.uk	47.23	99.66
114	Cloud Nine	www.cloud-nine.com	46.79	98.31
115	AIC-Entanet	www.aic.co.uk/entanet	46.12	100.00
116	Tripod UK	www.tripod.co.uk	44.30	99.90
117	NetMint, LLC	www.netmint.com	40.66	99.79
118	Legend Internet	www.legend.co.uk	38.68	99.90
119	Ultraspeed UK Limited	www.ultraspeed.co.uk	36.40	98.36
120	Far Networks	www.far.net	35.59	99.97
121	Stayfree Internet	www.stayfree.co.uk	31.72	100.00
122	Thinking Fish Limited	http://thinkingfish.com	28.57	99.79
123	Data Link Internet	www.data-link.net	28.18	95.73
124	Calligrafix	www.calligrafix.co.uk	27.55	99.08
125	PlugIn.co.uk Limited	www.plugin.co.uk	27.42	100.00
126	VillageNet	www.villagenet.com	27.28	99.76
127	Global Gold Network Ltd	www.globalgold.co.uk	26.58	99.76
128	Design Heaven	www.designheaven.com	26.06	99.73
129	Reeds Web Hosting	www.reedsweb.net	24.14	97.74
130	ME-NET!	www.me-net.net	23.53	97.64
131	Valdi Internet	www.valdi.net	21.46	99.32
132	gradwell dot com Limited	www.gradwell.com	20.07	99.21
133	INGS, Inc.	www.ings.com	18.17	99.28
134	Cybase Ltd	www.cybase.co.uk	18.07	99.76
135	WinNet	www.win-uk.net/	14.68	100.00
136	UK Internet Ltd	www.uki-demo.co.uk	14.01	99.86
137	Versus.NET	www.versus.net	13.88	95.38
138	Stratus Net	www.stratus.net	13.78	98.73
139	Croxsons New Media	www.cnm-uk.net	12.50	99.62
140	D.Net	www.dnet.it	12.20	99.62
141	Adept	www.adept.co.uk	12.20	99.90
142	Andover Online	www.andover.co.uk	12.15	95.76
143	Apanet	www.apenet.co.uk	12.03	87.10
144	Devilnet UK Ltd	www.devilnet.co.uk	11.92	98.46
145	Timewarp	www.timewarp.co.uk	9.51	92.06
146	Gibnet Limited	www.gibnet.gi	6.86	99.49
147	Webfuture	www.webfuture.co.uk	6.69	100.00
148	NUX	www.caines.co.uk	6.63	99.97
149	Orchid Internet	www.orchidinternet.co.uk	5.41	100.00
150	LDS Technology Ltd	www.lds.co.uk	3.46	99.49

Hosting performance tests

You've entrusted your beloved Web site to a Web host. How well is it being treated? Does it download quickly and reliably, or struggle down the wire? In conjunction with Zeus Technologies, we've put 150 Web host companies to the test.

Nildram is this month's winner, and the only host to break the 1,000kbps barrier. New entrant Inweb Networks came second, but scored 87.13 per cent on availability – anything below 99 per cent is poor. Slipping from first to third, NewNet scored a throughput of 943kbps, but only 93.5 per cent availability.

In fourth, VBCnet's good performance covers availability and throughput, but fifth place Virtual Internet has poor downtime with 97.68 per cent availability.

The highest climber this month is UKIP, up 69 places from 113th to 44th. Metronet rose 58 places from 107 to 49, and York UK Hosting jumps from 95 to 47.

The news isn't so good for Bucks Net, down 51 places from 53 to 104. D.Net drops 37 places from 103 to 140. Netlink Internet Services dives 36 places from 73 to 109, and Plus Net loses 34 places from 68 to 102.

This month sees eight new entrants. Apart from Inweb in second, the best new performers are Cybercity Internet at 27th, Jena Internet Services at 32nd, and Voyager Internet UK at 41st.

Measuring potential

Our top quoted throughput figures are over 1,000kbps, yet modems rarely manage more than 5kbps. The idea is, if you can download at 1,000kbps on a high bandwidth connection, it's the equivalent of 200 people simultaneously downloading at 5kbps.

Many of our test page files are from the host companies' own corporate pages. Not all the hosts' clients will get this premium level of performance, but the idea is that if a host can't get its own pages to download perfectly, it's unlikely to offer anything better for its clients.

More about the company behind the Web hosting tests

The *Internet Magazine* Web host tests are carried out by Zeus Technology, which provides Web hosting companies and ISPs with high performance, easy to use, feature rich Web server software. Zeus Technology has crafted the fastest and most scaleable Web server software in the world, providing mission critical reliability to its customers. Designed for large-scale I-commerce solutions, the company's products contain the strongest levels of security available. Zeus Technology and *Internet Magazine* are committed to delivering the best Web host service testing in the UK. For more details, see **www.zeustechnology.com**.

How we do it

The rankings are based on transfer speed – how fast files can be downloaded from the host server to our test machines. There are five test machines in the UK, plus a check machine in the US.

We measure data throughput when downloading a file within a specified size range. We choose images and not HTML files as they're far less likely to have been parsed or dynamically generated. Poor performance is usually the result of limited or overloaded bandwidth, or overloaded hardware/software.

The second figure in the table shows the availability of the host server. Our test system tries to contact the host every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day – nearly 3,000 tests a month. The availability figure tells you how often it gets through.

The tests ran over the period 1-12 November 1999. For more details on how the tests are carried out, plus a look at how the current tests are going, visit **www.webperf.net**.

The truth at last about changing ISP. It's hassle-free! Call us on 0800 056 2435

We have used several hosting companies over the years but none have approached the high standards set by NSL *Dr P.H. Johnson The Dedicated Partnership*

NSL are technically very competent, have hosted our server for over 3 years, and always provide 1st class professional service - *Gill Campbell,Marketing Director - Cortex*

Fastest servers in Scotland, fastest response to solving problems and technically the best guys I've come across. *David Blockley MD - The Internet Farm*

Outgrown your ISP and didn't realise?

Do you have an e-commerce solution that links your website into your Bank? Is your site as fast to browse as it should be? Do you have streaming video? Are you getting proper reports on your website visitors? Do you have an account manager who understands your business? If the answer to any of these questions is no, you should think about making the move to NSL NET.

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27. 24 hour service, 365 days a year.
28. Guaranteed response within 2 hours to any fault report or we pay you £50.

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■ Domain Name Registration

Register your domain name now. Includes unlimited mail and web forwarding and all NIC fees. **£65 p.a.**

■ Real Media Service

Add 5 streams of audio or video to your site for only **£600 per year.** One stream is required for each simultaneous viewer - buy more streams as you need them.

■ Generator

NSL NET is a Macromedia Authorised hosting provider. Generate your flash animations with live data from webforms or databases. We'll also help you with the server coding. **From £720 p.a.**

■ Mail List Management

Allow your customers to automatically add and remove themselves from your mail lists, either through web forms or mailing special addresses. Advanced security and management features.
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■ Colocated Server

You own dedicated server **from £250 per month.** Either supply your own rack mounted hardware or lease from us. The ideal choice for technically skilled companies who don't want to build their own data centre and arrange bandwidth.

■ Corporate Package

For customers requiring extra service a variety of Corporate Packages are available. Corporate customers have their own account manager, guaranteed levels of service, huge traffic limits suitable for major sites and advanced reporting on visitors to your site. **From £2,500 p.a.**

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NSL NET offers two different e-commerce packages. NSL Shop and NSL Clear which allow you to setup shop on the Internet and process payments automatically. These systems are currently powering many successful Internet businesses.

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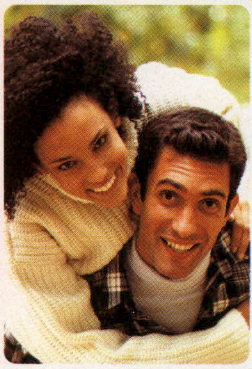

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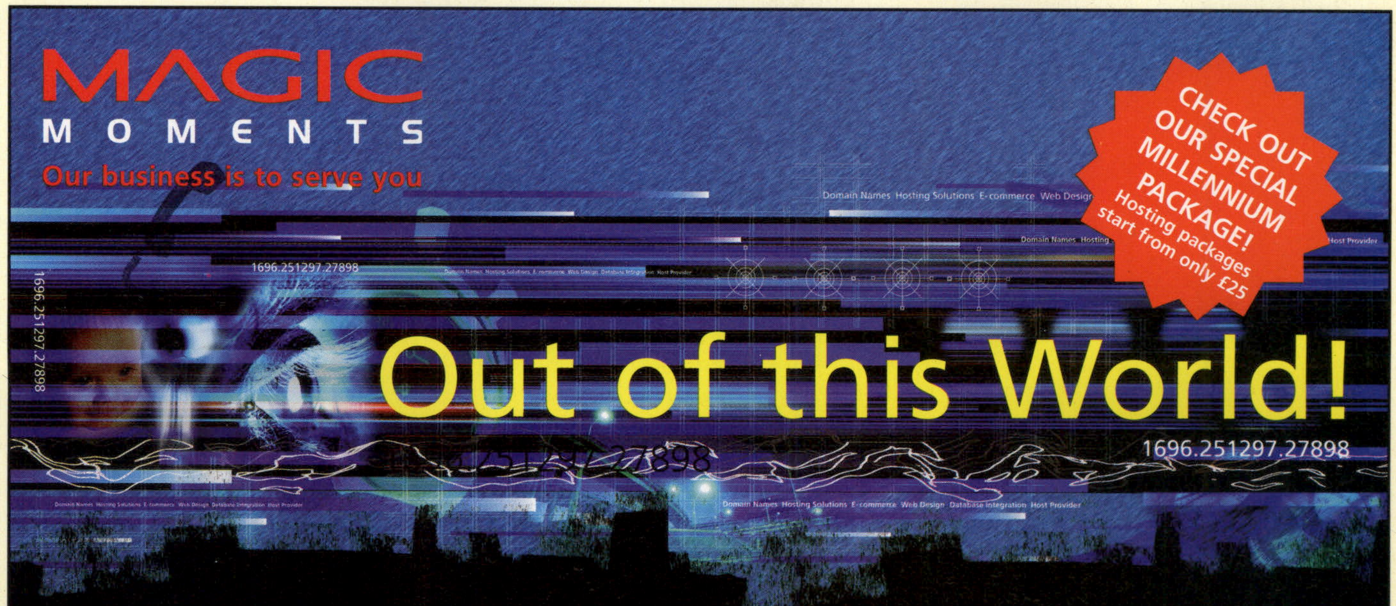
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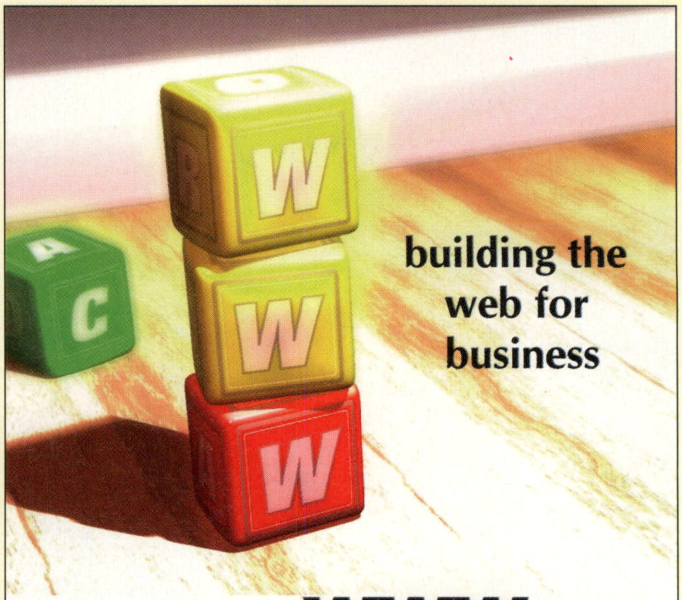

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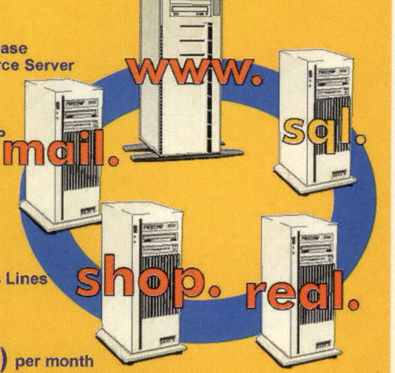

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Notes:
1. Prices taken from respective web sites, 28th Sept 1999.
2. Where applicable US$ prices are converted to sterling using a rate of 1.64:1.
3. Some competitors offer packages excluding email or web forwarding at a lower cost than shown above.

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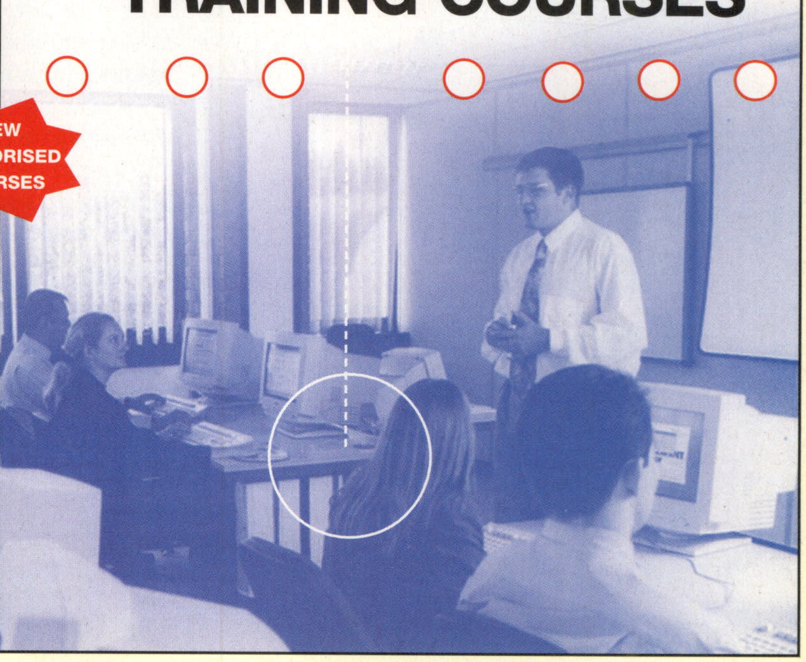

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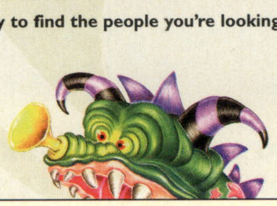

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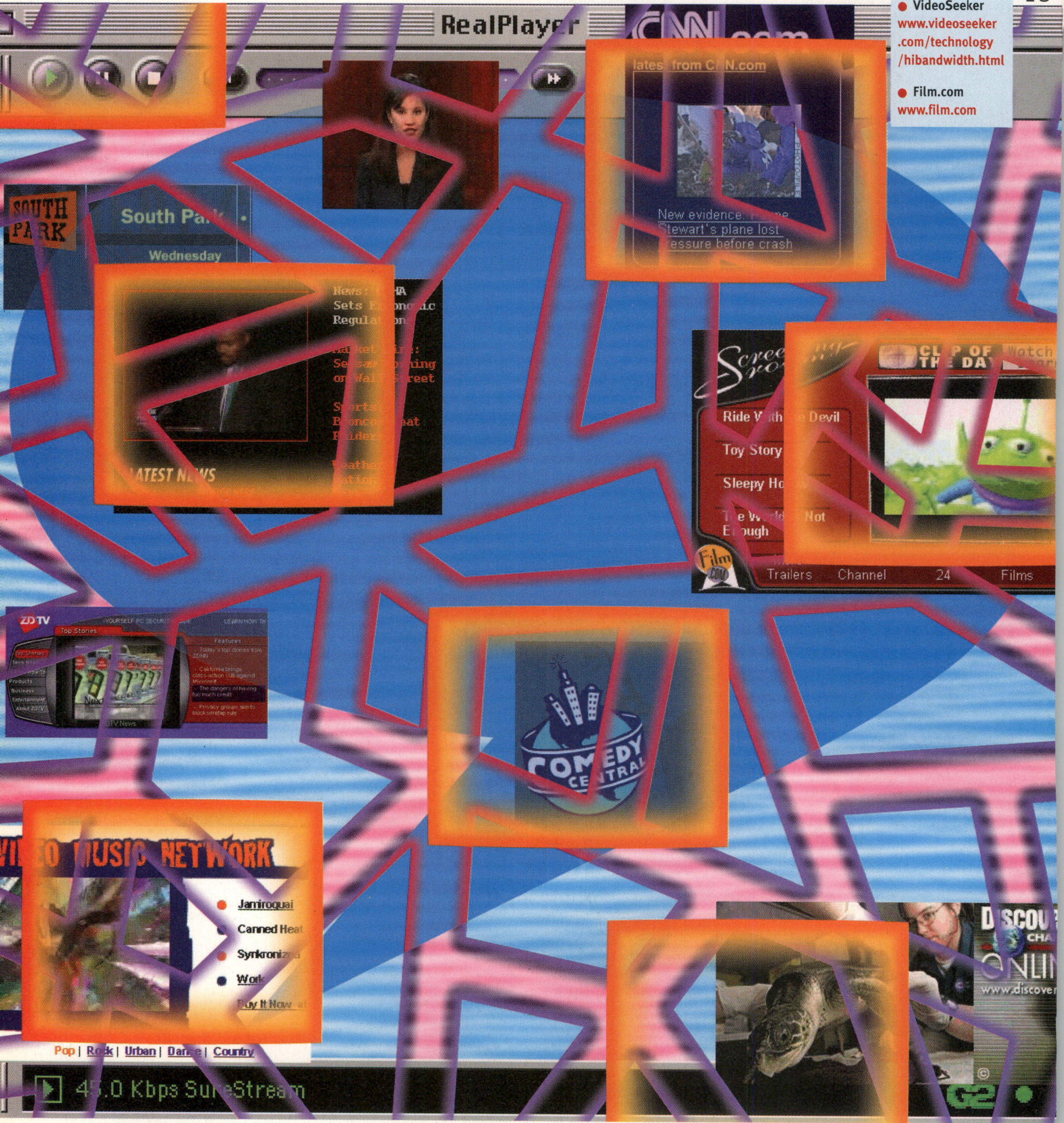
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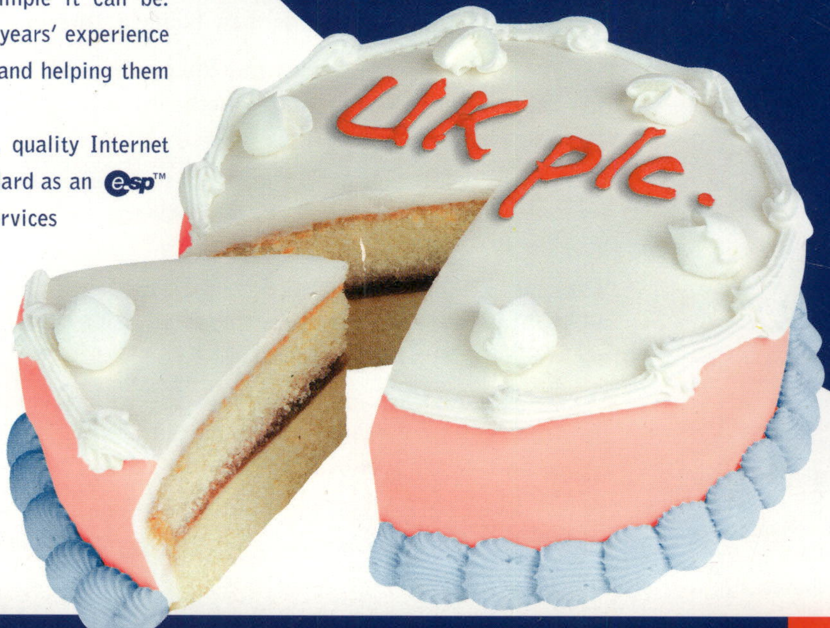

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